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THE

TWO FRIENDS,

A NOVEL.

BY

Marguerite Power Gardiner
THE COUNTESS OF BLESSINGTON.

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THE TWO FRIENDS.

CHAPTER I.

In acquiring a knowledge of the world, we are too apt to lose a knowledge of self.—Few, if any, ever perfectly understood both.

"You are late this morning, my dear Desbrow," said Lord Arlington, as he entered the dressing-room of his friend, who had not yet exchanged his robe de chambre for his morning toilette.—"How jaded you look; but no wonder, for I dare be sworn you have passed the night in the House of Commons."

"You are correct in your surmise," replied Mr. Desbrow, "I did not get away until six o'clock this morning, and had the mortification to find myself voting in a most discouraging minority, and to have lost sleep, breath, and time, for no purpose."

"You do not include the worst part of the penalty," said Lord Arlington; "the inhaling the pestiferous air of the most impure atmosphere in London, the effects of which are even now visible in your languid visage—*chacun a son goût.* I left Crockford's exactly at the same hour that you left St. Stephen's, having paired off with Welsford, and sought my pillow with the comfortable reflection of being a winner of three thousand pounds, which dame Fortune most opportunely sent me, when I was meditating the last resource of the destitute—a penitential letter to my father, or an application to a friend. For the Jews begin to look grave at my proposals——ungrateful rascals as they are—after my voting for their emancipation. Hang the dogs, I wish they would emancipate us."

"Will you never grow wise, Arlington?" asked his friend.

"Just the question I was about to put to you," replied

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Arlington. "I waste my money and time; you, your time and health; which then is the more unwise? I live in the world, and am of it; you pass through it, as on a forced march—your person in it, but your thoughts engaged in some Utopian speculation for bettering mankind; while the specimen of that genus, which ought, according to worldly wisdom, the most to interest and occupy you—namely, yourself, is left to chance, the very worst guardian a man can choose for his personal comfort."

"It is true," said Desbrow; "I think, perhaps, less of self, than do the generality of men. But I claim little merit for this self-abnegation; as, with my views, enjoyment of life must spring from a consciousness of duties discharged, or, at least, attempted to be discharged; and if personal gratification is alone to be made the guide of our actions, I fear few would attend to duties, as many, if not all of them are performed with some personal sacrifice."

"You will end by becoming a saint, my dear Desbrow," said Arlington; "but saint or sinner, I shall always love you, though, for my soul, I can't tell why, as no two creatures can be more unlike than we are. I wish I could get you to come to Crockford's of a night, and become one of us choice spirits."

"And I," returned Desbrow, "wish I could get you to wait for divisions at the House, and to go to Brooks's oftener than to White's; in short, to become one of us, I wont say choice spirits, but plodding spirits, who think more of country than of self."

"When you show me the good that results from your exertions," said Arlington, "I may be inclined to listen to your counsel; but, until then, I shall continue to amuse myself through the journey of life, while you add to its tediousness by examining every obstruction in your path, for the sake, forsooth, of rendering it more easy to future generations. Now I, like the quaint reasoner, who preferred the *present* to the *future*, am inclined to ask what has posterity done for us? and the answer being 'Nothing,' I am disposed to treat it with equal disregard. Spare me, dear Desbrow, the lecture that your grave looks and ominous shake of the head indicate. I must be off, as I have ten thousand places to go to, and ten thousand things to do; so adieu—*au revoir*—we shall meet at the House, for I must show myself there, and look out for a pair, as I dine with Ellesmere at eight, and would not miss being there for all the questions that have been, or will be, discussed this session."

"One word before you go," said Desbrow, "pray let me implore you to abandon play."

"What! was there ever such a Goth as to make such a request, the morning after I have won three thousand?"

"Better to make it after you have won, than after you have lost," said Desbrow. "Remember, my dear Arlington, we are old friends: if you find yourself under any pecuniary embarrassments in which I can be of use, command me—readily, cheerfully will I assist you; but I should be wanting in friendship, were I not to impress on your mind, that play will render the aid of friends useless, by drawing present distress and future ruin on you, if you continue to indulge in it. The pecuniary losses, which must ever be the certain result of play, great as are the embarrassments they lead to, are the least of the evils it entails. Gaming creates a moral torpedo, which palsies every noble and generous feeling in the heart of him who yields to it, rendering him reckless of his own future happiness, and callous with regard to that of those who depend on him for theirs. He who wins or loses thousands, becomes careless of hundreds; because he believes, with the credulity that ever appertains to the votaries of fortune, that she changes her smiles too frequently, not to visit him occasionally. The more he loses, the more he calculates on a reaction that will repay him his losses; and his expenses are incurred with a reference to his possible gains, but never to his possible losses; hence, heavy debts are added to the list of his troubles. *If he wins*, he continues to play, because it would be folly to abandon fortune when she is favourable; and if he loses, which, by some unaccountable (as he calls it) fatality, occurs much more frequently, he equally continues to gamble, because he has *lost too much* to leave off without trying to recover some part, and so plays until fortune and honour have left him for ever."

"By Jove, you have read me a rare lecture," said Arlington; "if Crocky heard it, he would think himself half ruined."

"Let us be serious for this once," said Desbrow. "If you have debts, I can lend you sufficient to pay them; but promise me to play no more: do this, dear Arlington, as a proof of friendship."

"Well, well," said Arlington, "I will compromise with you, by giving my word of honour not to play for a year: will that content you?"

"I am satisfied," said Desbrow, shaking him by the hand; "and now recollect that I am your banker for the payment of all debts, and do not again mortify your father by letting him

know that his last year's liberality has not redeemed or reclaimed you."

"You are a strange fellow, Desbrow," said Arlington, musingly. "Here you are ready to lend me thousands, with but a remote prospect of payment; and yet it was only yesterday that you denied yourself the two hunters that tempted you at Anderson's. I have still sufficient grace to appreciate this self-denial, though, alas! not to practise it; but among the set I live with, it would be set down as a certain proof of your total want of *nous*—a want they can as rarely pardon as understand."

"And yet, Arlington, those are the people with whom you live. How can you associate, day after day, with such persons? Can you consider those as friends, who could only be useful as confederates?"

"Why no," replied Arlington, "I am not sufficiently stupid to consider them as friends, according to the real acceptation of the word. I call my associates at Crockford's '*les amis du hasard*.' I anticipate all you would say, Desbrow, and feel its justice. I know the worthlessness of my companions; and if I am indulgent to their heartlessness and gross selfishness, it is because I am conscious of my own sins, in at least that point. I sometimes think I am formed for better things, *mais que voulez-vous?* I have fallen into a certain routine, from which I have not mental courage enough to disentangle myself; and I vent my contempt of my own weakness in satirical observations on those who have lured me into it. Now you, dear Desbrow,—forgive my candour,—might have saved me, had you been less Quixotic, less abstract in your theories; but the gulf between mere common-place sensualists, living only for themselves, and you, who live only for others, appeared too wide to be spanned by any arch that I could ever imagine; and so I have remained on the *terra firma* of positive clay, while you have soared into purer regions. Apathy is my bane; and is one of the worst moral diseases, because it incapacitates us from combating the encroachments of vice, or of opening our souls to the approaches of virtue."

"Feeling this, my dear Arlington, can you still submit to abandon yourself to the vortex of dissipation and folly, in which you have been wasting all the best faculties of your mind?"

"Why, I have somewhere read," said the insouciant Arlington, "that they who have not been scathed by vice, know not how to appreciate virtue, which, like health and wealth,

are never fully valued,—until—lost. Now, I have bought my experience; and no one values goodness more than I do, though few practise it less."

"A truce to raillery, I beg," said Desbrow; "let me entreat you to gratify me by consenting to give up your dinner at Ellesmere House to-day. I know there will be a division."

"Yes," said Arlington, "and we, as usual, shall find ourselves in an inglorious minority with the fag end of the liberals. Faugh! it makes me sick, to see our names mingled with those of men who owe their seats to reform, and whose presence offers the strongest argument against a measure that has opened Parliament to such ignorant pretenders."

"Ah! there is the old leaven of aristocratic prejudices peeping forth," said Desbrow; "you glory in the opinions which influence your votes, but are ashamed of the company in which the votes are given. It reminds me of an Irish lady, who turned Protestant because there are no pews in the Catholic churches, and that all ranks are mingled together without respect to persons. How, with such feeling, shall you aristocrats support the notion of the equality of the grave, the unceremonious contact of vulgar clay, and the impartial preference of the worm, who leaves some high-born lord or lady to banquet on some ignoble peasant."

"Spare me such hideous pictures," said Arlington; "really, Desbrow, you are too bad; but to reply to you in your own style, if we are condemned to mingle our fine porcelain with the vile pottery of vulgar earth in the grave, it is no reason that we should mix it while we have the power of selection. But you have entrapped me into a discussion on the future, when I have a thousand rare projects for the present. I cannot give up the dinner at Ellesmere House. Lady Walmer is to be there, and I would not miss meeting her for—no—not even for your best commendations, my dear Desbrow, though I do value them. So adieu."

"Stay one moment," said Desbrow, laying his hand on the arm of his friend. "I have known you to be imprudent, unthinking—a gamester; but I believed not that you could harbour, and unblushingly avow, an attachment to a married woman, and *that* woman the wife of one friend, and the sister of another. This is dreadful."

"I am not aware," said Arlington, coldly, "that I have avowed an attachment; but if I did, I see nothing so very dreadful, as you are pleased to call it, in the affair. Lady Walmer is certainly the wife and sister of two men who are my friends; how

the deuce else, should I have gained admittance, on such familiar footing, in the house; and consequently, how should I have had opportunities of knowing and liking her, or of making her like me. People are blamed for betrayals of friendship in such cases; but I say that it is the friendship that betrays, by giving the opportunities for such betrayals."

"This is mere sophistry, Arlington, and unworthy of you," said Desbrow. "I cannot, will not, allow myself to think that you are capable of the conduct I reprehend. No, unthinking as you are, you have too good a heart to wish to destroy the happiness of a family who have treated you with confidence and friendship."

An observer might have noticed the heightened colour and embarrassed air of Arlington, as his friend, in the warmth of his feelings, shook him cordially by the hand, repeating again that he disbelieved him capable of such selfishness and deception.

CHAPTER II.

"We are often ashamed of our friends, when it is they who have cause to be ashamed of us."

Lord Arlington was right when he observed that no two persons could be more unlike than he and his friend, yet a very sincere friendship subsisted between them; a friendship that might have given Desbrow as much power as he had inclination, to draw Arlington away from the futile society and pursuits which were enfeebling his mental powers, and hardening his heart; but that, unfortunately, the former's uncompromising severity of morals was accompanied by a devotion to liberalism in politics, that often led him into positions which exposed him to the ridicule of his opponents. The "world's dread laugh," which had, on more than one occasion, followed a speech of his, uniting the elevated moral code of a Plato, with the enthusiasm and fire of a Mirabeau, had alarmed the more worldly mind of Arlington, who shrank back affrighted from the influence that Desbrow had hitherto exercised over his opinions; and the sarcastic mockery with which he had heard his name

assailed at the clubs, though it failed to lessen his friendship, had the effect of decreasing his respect for Desbrow, until, by degrees, he had grown to think him a mere visionary, more likely to injure than advance any cause he espoused, and whose counsel it would be weakness to follow.

Lord Arlington was the only son of the Marquis of Heatherfield, a nobleman of the old school, as remarkable for high breeding, and as strictly honourable in practice as in theory. He was not like too many of our modern men of high station, who would resent the slightest imputation on their honour, yet commit actions which proved, that while they worshipped the shadow, they were careless of the substance. Courage with him was something more than an impulse depending on mere physical force, or adopted with reference to conventional opinions. He had not the courage, so common in our days, of tergiversation in his politics; he had not one opinion when his party was *in*, and another when *out* of office, on the plea of expediency; he could not sell a friend or foe, an unsound horse, or give an insincere opinion; he could not overreach a simpleton, or compete with a rogue; in short, he was an old-fashioned gentleman, as gentlemen ought ever to be, and one of the admirable specimens that England can still boast, which proves that noblemen and gentlemen may be considered synonymous terms. He had horses on the turf, because he thought it incumbent on persons of his station and fortune, to encourage the breed of horses; but he was never seen to come in contact with blacklegs or jockeys; he lost regularly at every Newmarket meeting, to the surprise of no one but himself, as he continued to pursue the same unsophisticated system in betting that he had been initiated into forty years before, and consoled himself for his losses, by seeing only the most distinguished names in his betting-book. Arlington once ventured to insinuate to him, that his repeated defeats on the turf were to be attributed to his disdaining to practise the stratagems, or to take advantage of the information to be acquired from certain persons, whose *extraordinary* sagacity in such matters no one questioned, and of which few failed to avail themselves when opportunity offered; nay, he hinted that many of the noble names who figured on the creditor side of his father's book, were more than suspected of a prescience with regard to winning horses, that *mere* experience could not furnish; but the air of offended dignity, with which the venerable nobleman repelled the suspicion, so degrading to "his order," precluded his recurring to it, except at the risk of

offending him, which Arlington was by no means willing to do, as he was much attached to his father. His associates at the clubs, failed not to animadvert on the patriarchal simplicity, as they termed it, of Lord Heatherfield; or to take advantage of it, by backing horses against the favourite horse, which his lordship—an admirable judge of horseflesh—thought certain of winning. Many were the pleasantries passed at the hazard table at Crockford's, on the facility of securing hundreds by betting against him; nay, some went so far as to advise Arlington to keep the money in the family, by offering his father the long odds against all his favourites: but the gravity with which the counsel was received, prevented its being renewed; as, however he might regret the large and repeated losses of Lord Heatherfield, he was little disposed to permit any jokes at his parent's expense—at least in his presence.

Though young in years, Arlington was old in experience; he had not passed five seasons in the artificial atmosphere of London, without having experienced its chilling influence on the affections, and its petrifying power on the opinions, which threatened to become fixed in the cold rigidity of unbending selfishness; yet, there were moments when the natural warmth and goodness of his nature triumphed over his acquired egotism, and left him open to better feelings. In such moments, he turned from the venal herd with which he associated, to that honourable and high-minded father, or to his generous and single-hearted, though eccentric, friend, Desbrow, and sought in their society a relief from the apathetic torpor that was growing on him. But exploded maxims and Quixotic sentiments from the one, and exaggerated opinions and Utopian systems of impracticable perfectibility from the other, discouraged his advances, and he fell again into the gay but heartless circle, where an epigram, a sarcasm, or a bon mot, launched with unerring aim against all that is most respectable, never failed to turn the laugh against it, and to win for the authors that applause which silences dissenters and gains partisans.

Worldly wisdom was considered the science most necessary to be acquired in Arlington's set; but their definition of the term was so widely apart from the general acceptation of it in other circles, that an adept in the science at Crockford's would be considered as little short of a madman, among the wise men of the east—of Temple Bar. For the *rich* to stake thousands on the chance of winning, and the *poor* to risk as much on a similar hazard, but with the advantage of being unable to pay,

is a common every-night occurrence in the gilded saloons of St. James's Street; but to know *how* to calculate the odds, when to back a caster *in* or *out*, requires that peculiar worldly wisdom, which can only be gained by a frequent attendance at a place that may not be named to "ears polite," and whence, contrary to the old received opinion, the presence of its nightly visitors, at all the places of fashionable resort, proves that there *is* a redemption.

Arlington had, like all his associates, won some hundreds, and lost some thousands, but still he believed himself not only a lucky but a scientific player. Whether he was the last we will not stop to enquire but that, on the whole, he might be considered the former, we are ready to admit; as he had for five seasons, persevered in putting his luck to the proof, and was *not* yet ruined; having only exhausted one year's income, and anticipated another, independent of some thousands paid for him by his liberal father.

Arlington's days passed in a round of vapid amusement, that filled up his time, but failed to afford him any rational enjoyment; a latent feeling frequently reminded him that he was formed for better things, and there were moments when he turned away disgusted, if not sated, from the routine of empty pleasures into whose vortex he had plunged; but habit, that giant who enslaves even more than did the fabled giants of old, still held him in its chains: and though he had learned by experience that pleasure is not happiness, he continued to act as if he knew not the distinction, mentally promising himself, that *some day or other* (that indefinite epoch referred to by all who meditate amendment) he would shake off the inglorious thraldom of fashion, and live a different life.

Desbrow was of a different character from Arlington, and his pursuits rendered the difference still more apparent. Left an orphan at an early age, and heir to a very large fortune, he had been sent to a preparatory school when only six years old, and there the first impression of friendship was stamped on his ductile heart by Arlington, a lively affectionate boy of his own age, who returned it with all the warmth of childhood. From this private school they were sent, nearly at the same age, to Eton, where the friendship commenced in infancy, "grew with their growth, and strengthened with their strength." But even at this early period, each had discovered that his friend was not exactly like himself, and the discovery often gave pain. Desbrow was never so happy as when, during the play hours, he devoured, rather than read, some abridged history or ro-

mance; and his chest would expand, his cheeks glow, and his eyes flash, as some trait of heroic courage, or noble self-devotion, was brought before him on the page. He would peruse it aloud, and with enthusiasm turn to grasp the hand of Arlington, and claim his sympathy; but Arlington's approbation was so cold and measured, in comparison with *his* feelings, that Desbrow, disconcerted and chilled, could not at such moments but grieve that his friend felt not as he did. Arlington, on his side, thought that the time allotted for recreation might be much better employed than in reading; yet, he often remained with Desbrow, because he enjoyed not play without him, though his thoughts all the time were in the play-ground.

Notwithstanding that the abstraction of Desbrow produced some wonder and occasional sneers from his juvenile companions, his abilities, generosity, and high courage had won their esteem.

Amongst them he was a sort of privileged person, whose eccentricities, if they repelled familiarity, precluded not respect; but Arlington was the most popular boy at Eton, and used his popularity, as it is but too generally used, as a means of attaining his own object, which was simply amusement, Desbrow being the only person who resisted his daily devised plans of pleasure, though the only person whose companionship in them he condescended to solicit.

The dissimilarity of their tastes and pursuits chilled not the attachment that united them. Desbrow had often extricated his friend from pecuniary embarrassments, brought on by extravagance, though his allowance was considerably less than that of Arlington: and, at such moments, the latter felt that to the self-denial of Desbrow he owed his escape from the mortifying necessity of appealing to a father, whose liberality ought to have prevented his son from being driven to such expedients. Prudent resolutions always followed such reflections, but they faded away before the first temptation that assailed them: and the youths left Eton for Cambridge nearly at the same time, with no feeling in common save that of friendship.

Desbrow's guardian, Mr. Beaumont, a near relative, of large fortune and misanthropic habits, was the most unfit person to whom he could be confided. His vacations were spent with him; and the baleful influence his dogmatical theories acquired over the mind of his ward, was evident when he returned from his visits, by an increased seclusion, and a more unbending adherence to his own opinions. Mr. Beaumont, in

his youth, had been jilted by a young lady, to whom he was passionately attached, and of whose affection he thought himself secure. Of a naturally morose turn of mind, this disappointment soured his nature, and he visited on the whole sex, nay, on all the world, the dislike that the inconstancy of the lady had engendered toward his species. To the aristocracy he indulged a hatred that he missed no opportunity of betraying. This feeling had its source in the circumstances, that she who had deceived, and the rival who had supplanted him, both belonged to that class; and this hatred influenced his conduct, long after he had ceased to reflect on its original cause. With a strong bias to Tory politics, he became a violent liberal, for the sole purpose, as he declared, of assisting to humble the proud aristocrats; and supported many a measure in direct violation of his judgment, to further this desired end. How many of the most intemperate politicians, of all parties, have been led by equally futile causes, originating in selfish disappointments or personal piques? How many pseudo patriots has the refusal of a minister made? and how many ultra Tories have sprung into life from similar reasons? Mr. Beaumont had talked to Desbrow of the pride, heartlessness, and selfishness of the aristocracy, as if such defects were peculiar to that class, and not appertaining to the whole mass of mankind, and the ductile mind of his ward had received the impression, ere reason or experience had enabled him to refute the injurious fallacy.

Thus, he learned to look with suspicion on those with whom his station in life had cast him, and was ready to advocate any measure that tended to elevate the classes which he was led to consider their opponents. At Cambridge, the exclusiveness of a few of the scions of nobility still farther increased Desbrow's preconceived dislike to them; and fixed in him prejudices that, if not impossible to be eradicated, were at least difficult to be conquered.

CHAPTER III.

" Dans un salon, l'enthousiasme est de mauvais goût ; il fait dissonance avec le ton froidement poli qui est d'étiquette, comme des gants glacés ; à la tribune nationale, l'éloquence est une conversation, les mains dans les poches ; et si Mirabeau ressuscité y apparaissait avec les foudres de sa voix, et les passions fougueuses de sa dialectique, les centres lui riraient au nez, et le président le rappellerait à l'ordre."

A VISIT made at Heatherfield Castle, and an intimacy formed with its noble owner, did more towards correcting the false impressions of Desbrow, than all intercourse he had yet had with the aristocracy. The genuine nobleness, candour, and dignified simplicity of Lord Heatherfield, soon made themselves felt, and were as soon appreciated by Desbrow; who quickly learned to respect even the prejudices of the venerable nobleman, intermingled as they were with so many virtues and estimable qualities. Lord Heatherfield, on his side, formed a high estimation of his son's friend; in truth, notwithstanding the difference of their political opinions, as well as ages, the characters of the two approximated much more closely than did that of either with Arlington's; for there was a certain degree of enthusiasm in both, which found a chord that vibrated in the heart of the other.

If Desbrow learned to think better of the aristocracy, from his intimacy with one of the most excellent of its members, Lord Heatherfield was taught to judge more leniently the classes who had found so warm and high-minded a defender in Desbrow. The prejudices of both yielded to the salutary effects produced by witnessing the admirable qualities of each other, and having arrived at esteem, they soon began to respect their hitherto severely-judged opponents,—the first and great step towards that most desirable stage in the march of intellect—conciliation. How many kind hearts and congenial natures are kept apart by political prejudices; hearts and natures, that, if known to each other, might have broken down the hitherto impregnable fortresses and ramparts of prejudice that divided them. But when will men cease to be governed by the tyrant Prejudice, who, like all tyrants, is only powerful

in the weakness of his victims. Does not death, sickness, and sorrow, with all the other thousand ills to which men are heirs, furnish sufficient causes for embittering this mortal pilgrimage without the heart-burnings, estrangements, and discords, to which the indulgence of prejudices gives birth? Alas! it is from our own failings that our most frequent, if not most painful, trials arise! and by giving way to passion and prejudice, we deprive ourselves of many consolations which the sympathy and kindness of congenial minds might afford us.

But to return to our story. After each visit to Heatherfield Castle, Mr. Beaumont discovered that his ward joined with less animation in his strictures against the aristocracy; nay, that he not unfrequently dissented from the unqualified censures with which he assailed them, even though Desbrow was more disposed to make exceptions against the sweeping anathema, than to defend the whole order from its fury. Mr. Beaumont attributed this change in his ward's feelings to his friendship for Lord Heatherfield and Arlington, and often taunted him, on the subject of the father's weakness and prejudice, and the son's sybarite love of pleasure, unconscious that he himself was giving way to much more blameable prejudices, while unjustly decrying Lord Heatherfield.

"You will end," would the old man say to his ward, "by being,—I won't say elevated, but degraded, to the peerage, which will be the price paid for the relinquishment of your independence of opinion. I see it all: that old courtier and his unprincipled son have made an apostate of you."

"Pardon me, my dear Mr. Beaumont," would Desbrow reply, "but you quite mistake the character of the Marquis of Heatherfield and that of his son."

"What! you would persuade me that the father is not a pompous, ceremonious, prosing nobleman of the *old school;* and the son, a thoughtless, unprincipled, selfish voluptuary of the new?" asked the cynical guardian. "No, no; *I* know better than that; *I* am not to be cajoled, though you may be. I know the aristocracy well,—too well,—and equally despise the feudal tyrants of the old regime, as the selfish epicureans of the new. Both are the drones, yes, Desbrow, the useless drones, that consume the honey of the constitutional hive, to the detriment of the useful bees."

"But surely, sir, you must admit that the Marquis of Heatherfield, who has never held place or pension, cannot be called a drone."

"He would have been glad to have held both, if he could,"

interrupted Mr. Beaumont; "and would, if the labourer had been found worthy of his hire."

"Really, sir, you must excuse my dissenting from your opinions," replied Desbrow. "I think highly of the Marquis of Heatherfield; and as to my friend Arlington, I cannot admit that he is either unprincipled or selfish."

"The devil you don't?" asked Mr. Beaumont, angrily. "What! then, it is not unprincipled or selfish to spend double the profuse allowance given him by his father; to vex and harass that too indulgent father by incurring enormous debts; and then to have recourse to the first easy dupe of a friend he encounters, to enable him to pursue the same system? This," continued the old man, "in middle, or low life, would be considered unprincipled and selfish; but when the brows of the actor are encircled with a coronet, it appears that it ceases to be either."

To such arguments, Desbrow found it difficult to reply. He could not defend Arlington; but he liked him too well to abandon him to the severe animadversions of his guardian, without, at least, giving him credit for the many good qualities which he knew he possessed, the recapitulation of which only served to draw forth sundry ill-natured comments.

"He may well be generous," would the old man say, "if he finds a foolish father, and a thoughtless friend, to administer to his prodigality; he may well be good-tempered, if all pecuniary annoyance is saved him, by want of principle or feeling to be wounded by them; and he may well be ready to sacrifice a little to those who sacrifice so much to him."

Both the young men left Cambridge with academical honours, and the general esteem of all who knew them. Arlington had excited a more lively interest amongst his companions, from the hilarity and sociability of his disposition; but Desbrow left an impression on the learned professors that he was a person formed to make a sensation in public life, provided he conquered the bias to eccentricity that was visible in his character. Both the friends were returned members for Parliament soon after they had completed their majority; both were at first considered as staunch supporters of the administration then in power. Desbrow, however, soon declared himself that political paradox so seldom to be met with—"an independent member," which was defined to mean a member that could not be depended upon; and, as is usual in such cases, he offended all parties. His brilliant talents, which could not have failed to secure him celebrity, if he had acted with either of the influential parties,

could not screen him from the stings and arrows of ridicule, directed at him by both, whenever his eloquence was employed against the measures of either. The Radicals, as they were called in the House, turned with hope to what they considered so promising a leader to their ranks; but were soon discouraged by the fierté and sternness with which the uncompromising Desbrow met their advances, or laid down his own generous, but Utopian, political system. His large fortune, ancient family, extensive connexions, and fine person, were passports to the best society that London can boast. We have placed fortune at the top of the list of his claims to attention, because it is the one that never fails to obtain it—an opinion warranted by the fact so thoroughly established, that in Christian England, a wealthy Jew, with no other recommendation than his property, is sure of a cordial reception in circles where merit, wanting it, would be barely tolerated; and he who can buy "golden opinions from all sorts of men," will have little reason to complain of "want of all the external marks of respect in London." Bacon said, that "knowledge is power;" but had he lived in our days, he would have been compelled to substitute "riches" for "knowledge;" so universal is the homage paid to them in all ranks: and, when one sees the distinctions fortune can command, one is compelled to assent to the truth of the Frenchman's remark, that, *L'or est comme le soleil, il donne à la boue de la consistance.*

The twelve thousand a-year, landed property, that Desbrow really possessed, with above a hundred thousand pounds in the funds, the savings of his long minority, were magnified into at least twice that amount, by that most generally untrue oracle, common rumour. His whereabouts were prated of in the fashionable newspapers; anticipations were given of the splendid mansion to be fitted up, in the style of Louis Quatorze, for the rich Mr. Desbrow; new services of gilt plate were to be added to the costly family plate of his ancestors; and it was more than hinted at, that the fine diamonds, which attracted Queen Charlotte's admiration at the drawing-rooms some thirty years before, on the presentation of Mr. Desbrow's mother, were only waiting until he had selected, from out the parterre of aristocratic beauty, some rosebud worthy of being decked in them. For some weeks, the columns of all the fashionable journals were eloquent in praise of—his *wealth*, and dilated with grandiloquence on all the *agréments* it commanded. In one he was styled, *par excellence*, the *rich* Mr. Desbrow; and in another, the richest commoner in England. His porter

had scarcely time to run his eye over the morning papers, from the repeated knocks at the door. Visits and cards of invitation poured in for many weeks in advance, counting on that upon which none can calculate—*life*—the most precarious of all our possessions, and bidding guests to feast six weeks after date, as if existence was held by a fixed tenure. Pink, blue, and straw coloured notes, redolent with perfumes, were mingled with the heterogeneous mass of letters that littered the hall table every day. Petitions from reduced officers, whose regiments it would have puzzled the War Office to discover; from distressed gentlemen with large families, "unfit to work, yet *not* ashamed to beg;" unfortunate young ladies, under the most dreadful embarrassment; and elderly ones, wanting the necessaries of life, appealed to "well-known benevolence," to rescue them from despair. In short, such shoals of applications were daily made, that nothing less than the purse of Fortunatus could have enabled Desbrow to comply with even a tenth part of the demands made on him.

Silversmiths, jewellers, upholsterers, coachmakers, tailors, hatters, boot and shoe-makers, all besieged his door, with the newest patterns and chef-d'œuvres of their respective crafts, begging the honour of entering his name in their books. New discoveries of balsams, and pomades for renovating the hair, or toupets and patent spring perruques for concealing the want of it, were recommended to his notice; and dentists apprised him that the finest sets of teeth, emulating pearl, and far surpassing the natural production, were ready to be submitted for his inspection. Desbrow could not forbear a smile, as he glanced in the glass, at his curly locks of rich brown, and his regular teeth of pure white; and in candour we must admit that there was some portion of self-complacency intermingled with the reflection, that at least *he* had no occasion for such substitutes. There were other letters which excited frowns rather than smiles: they came from the proprietors of gaming-houses, designating their establishments under the specious names of clubs, "having the honour of informing Mr. Desbrow that the—club is open from ten at night until four in the morning, with the bank on the table." Such notifications Desbrow threw with indignation into the fire. What! thought he, is London, the first capital in the world, arrived at that degree of depravity, that such invitations are openly sent to men of character, without their being considered as an insult? He was one day in the act of committing several of these epistles to the flames, when Arlington entered, and observing the visible

emotion of his friend, enquired what had so moved him. When the cause was explained, Arlington could not resist a laugh, at what he called the virtuous indignation of Desbrow, who became almost angry that Arlington *could* laugh at that which he considered an implied insult—the being invited to a gaming-house.

"All such letters I throw into the fire," said Desbrow, suiting the action to the word.

"A sort of poetical justice," said Arlington, laughing, "as you consign them to that native element supposed to be peculiar to the places whence they originated. I too, like you, burn them; but I am afraid, unlike you, I generally look in at these pandemoniums, and have often left there, not only the contents of my purse, but my temper. Spare me, dear Desbrow, the moral lesson, that your grave face portends; all that you *would*, that you *could*, say on the subject, my own common sense has said to me fifty times, and yet I have gone on — well, well, *le jour viendra* when I shall repent, and lead a sober life, and give you the merit of my conversion.

CHAPTER IV.

"La civilisation actuelle est un mensonge convenu qui ne trompe que les niais."

The warm reception that Desbrow experienced on making his debut in London, soon subsided into a coldness bordering on indifference, when his soi-disant friends and acquaintances discovered how little benefit could result to them from his riches. Those who had calculated on his dinners, and had even resolved to assist him with their advice in choosing an *artiste de cuisine*, were as indignant, as they were disappointed, at what they termed his absurd mode of living. Others, who had kindly undertaken to select horses for him, from the stables of dealers with whom their accounts were neither of short date nor small amount, felt almost offended when he civilly declined their assistance: and those, who had, from equally disinterested motives, recommended their too *trusting* coachmakers, tailors, and jewellers, were so loud in their cen-

sures of his want of taste in not employing them, that people were so ill-natured as to suppose that they had more than a common interest in their recommendations.

In proportion to Desbrow's sinking in the estimation of his fashionable young male acquaintance, he rose in that of the elderly; he was cited by fathers as a model to sons; his prudence, his abstinence from gaming, and keeping race-horses, were recorded not only as praiseworthy omissions of extravagance, but as positive virtues; and groaning sires, at each new demand from ruined and ruinous sons, wished that *they* had such heirs as Desbrow. The ladies of a certain age also honoured him with no slight portion of esteem; and mothers and aunts reposed so much confidence in him, that they frequently poured into his ear complaints of daughters and nieces, who disliked balls, fêtes, and routs so much, that they were obliged to be forced to appear at them; and yet, the dear creatures were so sweet-tempered, that, when at such entertainments, they appeared so content, few could ever have supposed they were there unwillingly. The young ladies also showed no disinclination towards Desbrow; and, though some persons maliciously insinuated that his thousands and tens of thousands had some share in their admiration, yet he was too good-looking, well-bred, and agreeable, to admit of its being believed that his fortune was the principal attraction.

We pass over five seasons in London, and as many winters in the country, during which Desbrow pursued the even tenour of his way, untempted, but not untempting, in matrimonial speculations. Various had been the country houses to which he had been invited for the shooting seasons; and he had now become so *au fait* of the accomplishments of the Lady Marys, Sophias, and Augustas of each lordly mansion, that he shrank back from the exhibition and exhibitors, and learnt to consider each reunion *des grandes maisons* as a bazaar, where beauty and accomplishments were exposed for sale to the highest bidder.

When appealed to by acquaintances, if he did not think Lady Mary or Augusta very beautiful, he assented with a coldness that resembled more that of an anchorite, than a young man of four-and-twenty; and when repeatedly assured how clever such or such a young lady was, he admitted it in a way that proved he did not consider cleverness and agreeability synonymous terms. An aching void was in his heart; and he began to think he was too fastidious to hope that it might

ever be filled up, as the women whose beauty attracted, repelled him by their frivolity or affectation; and those whose cleverness allured, disgusted him by their pedantry and love of display. From flirtations with matrons he was deterred, not by want of encouragement, but by the severity of his moral principles; as, unlike the generality of his contemporaries, he *had* tenets and certain established rules of conduct in his mind, from which hitherto he had never swerved; and though they exposed him to the ridicule of those who gloried in that which he shunned, he had sufficient mental courage, not only to act up to these, but not to be ashamed of them—a *mauvaise honte* of which too many are often guilty.

The experience of each session of Parliament had convinced Desbrow that there existed but little chance of his seeing the adoption of the changes he desired; still he conscientiously attended each debate, and voted on each division, in support of the measures he advocated. He was looked on by the tepid politicians as a Quixote theorist, and by the extreme liberals as an impracticable one. His total freedom from prejudice, in judging his political opponents,—a freedom so rare at all times, but doubly so, when party feeling ran high,—had preserved him from exciting or indulging angry passions; and he had passed through the busy scenes of life more as a spectator than as an actor.

A refined taste and knowledge in the fine arts led to many hours of pure enjoyment: in visiting the studios of the best artists, in painting and sculpture, and in selecting from them whatever most pleased his fastidious eye, to grace his mansion, he found an inexhaustible source of interest.

The sums that were lavished by other men of his station and fortune on horses, and in gaming, were expended by Desbrow in encouraging the arts; and many a chef-d'œuvre decked the walls and niches of his gallery, which offered triumphant proofs of the excellence at which our native artists have arrived.

Many of Desbrow's hours were passed in his library, which was well filled with the choicest works; and time never flew so rapidly and agreeably, as when, seated in an easy-chair with a favourite author in his hand, he yielded to the fascination of solitude, feeling "never less alone than when alone." Often did the thought occur to him, of how delicious it would be to have his solitude shared by some lovely and amiable being; to whom he could read aloud the passages that most pleased him, and in whose sympathy his pleasures would be doubled. But the young ladies, whose exteriors might have suited his taste,

had so fatigued him with the endless display of their accomplishments, that he sighed in despair at the hopelessness of meeting a woman young, lovely, and with a mind that could *think* and *converse*, instead of exhibiting her proficiency in superficial talents too often acquired at the expense of the sacrifice of intellectual cultivation. Though the unthinking part of the world pause not to enquire into causes, whose effects amuse them, those who look beyond the surface know that there are no Admirable Crichtons in the world, male or female, and that a young lady cannot apply to music and painting alone, the number of hours necessary to arrive at excellence in either, without considerably deducting from the time which should have been devoted to the attainment of that general information and instruction, absolutely essential to the formation of an intellectual and cultivated companion. Fine musicians and painters can always be procured by the rich, who require not artists in their wives; but rational society, conversational powers, and general information cannot be bought. These are the only ingredients that sweeten life and cement affection among married people. Accomplishments are delightful accessories, but cultivation of mind is an indispensible requisite in domestic happiness; yet upon this simple truth few parents reflect, and young women are taught arts by which they may shine in public, rather than the solid attainments that shed a mild and even lustre in private life. Hence that want of extraneous society, experienced by so many wedded pairs in fashionable life, which renders a conjugal tête-à-tête proverbial for its dulness.

Such reflections were forced on the mind of Desbrow, when listening to the syren tones and scientific accompaniments of many of the young ladies who exhibited nightly before him, on the harp or piano, or whose portfeuilles displayed sketches that would not have shamed even some of the best of our artists; but whose conversation, if conversation it might be called, completely proved how such accomplisments had been acquired —at the sacrifice of the cultivation of their mental faculties.

Arlington laughed at the fastidious taste of his friend; and, when leaning over the instrument whence some young lady was drawing dulcet sounds, that "wrapt his entranced soul in elysium," he pitied the morbid feelings of Desbrow, which prevented his enjoyment of talent, because she who displayed it, had bought it at the price of—mind. The truth was, that Desbrow esteemed women much more highly than did his friend; and was grieved, when, by a perverted system of education, he saw them take a lower grade in the scale of utility,

than, as rational beings, he thought them destined to fill; whereas Arlington, who looked only for amusement in female society, considered them as creatures formed to administer to his caprices,—beautiful triflers, with whom he might while away his leisure hours, seek with the same nonchalance that he sought his other pleasures, and leave with as little regret.

The beau-ideal of woman, as she ought to be, that Desbrow had created in his imagination, and after which his soul aspired, made him view every handsome female with feelings of interest; which only subsided on his discovering how unlike each was to the picture his fancy had drawn. Then, like all enthusiasts, he turned with disgust from what disappointed his ardent expectation; and saw with distorted vision, the defects of those who had fallen short of the perfection he had imagined for them.

Young men who have not had sisters, or near female relations, with whom they have been domesticated, are but too apt to form false estimations of women. Seeing them only in general society, where even the least coquettish of the sex are apt to assume qualities of which they have only the semblance, such men are liable either to give them implicit credit for the possession of these qualities, or, if sharp-sighted, to condemn them too severely for their assumption. Hence women often find dupes, or sceptics, in men of this temperament; while in those who have passed much of their early youth with mothers and sisters, they meet with neither, as such men know by experience that many admirable qualities may exist, in combination with a too great desire of attracting admiration,—a fault from which few women are wholly free.

CHAPTER V.

"Oui, te dis-je, la société est comme une machine à vapeur lancée par une force secrète et prodigieuse; c'est extravagance que de croire l'arrêter en jetant sous une de ses roues ton petit grain de sable que tu appelles principes. Il n'existe plus aujourd'hui qu'un seul bien d'homme à homme, de société à société, de gouvernement à gouvernement?—L'intérêt, l'intérêt lui seul.

Desbrow had observed that for several weeks he had seen much less of his friend Arlington than formerly; and that when they met, Arlington appeared much more serious than he had been wont to do.

Desbrow was not one of those tepid friends who enquire not into the cause of any alteration, lest their assistance may be required,—a tact in the practice of which, our young men of the nineteenth century have acquired a peculiar proficiency. He, unlike the common herd, sought out his friend, and enquired, with that unaffected expression of interest, which never can be mistaken for mere curiosity, why Arlington appeared so serious and *distrait*. The earnestness with which he endeavoured to prove that he was neither, did not convince Desbrow; but he declined urging him further, seeing that the subject was disagreeable to him.

A few nights after, at a *soirée* at Lady Ardmore's, the marked and unceasing attention of Arlington to Lady Walmer, disclosed the probable cause of his pre-occupation; and Desbrow saw with regret that he was not the only observer of the flirtation, as all the society seemed to regard the actors in it with glances, in which more of malice than charity was visible.

While standing talking to two or three men of his acquaintance, one remarked that the affair between Lady Walmer and Arlington seemed quite established; another said that Arlington was a happy dog; and a third observed that if Lady Walmer committed herself, it might be attributed to the improper female society her husband permitted her to keep.

"Fancy," said Lord Sneerwell, "letting her go about with that abominable old woman, Lady Bronze, who has made

more marriages, and assisted in giving more cause for dissolving them, than all the women in England put together."

"I assure you," said Sir Edward Ponder, "she has marred more marriages than she has helped to make; for many of my acquaintance are afraid to marry, while old Bronze remains in activity."

"How very ill-natured you are all," said Lord Metcalf. "Now, I maintain that Lady Bronze is the most useful person in London; for she has a heart to pity, and a house to receive the pining votaries of the tender passion, and one has only to lose a few hundreds to her at écarté, which she has a singular facility in assisting you to do, and she is your friend for the season, and not only your friend, but your friend's friend—*pardessus le marché* Arlington has taken his stray hundreds to her mansion instead of Crockford's, ever since his grand passion for Lady Walmer,—and you see the happy result."

"You may say what you will," rejoined Lord Sneerwell, "but Lady Bronze's is one of the pleasantest houses in town; there, one can always have flirtation, écarté, and scandal,—three of the most agreeable pastimes going; and the old dame plays her cards so well, in more than one sense of the word, that *chez elle*—'Lovers are all they ought to be, and husbands not the least alarmed.' By the by," added Sneerwell, "old Bronze got off very well in not being named on a certain trial, in which the gouvernante of poor Lady —— was asked to name the person she considered *fashionable*, but not *proper* society. What a tale might there be disclosed!"

Disgusted with this exposé, Desbrow left the saloon, reflecting that the vice which had been thus laid bare, without shocking any of the individuals who had heard it except himself, was tolerated in a class that affected to shrink from contact with aught approaching to vulgarity; and yet could live on terms of intimacy with a female, who practised vices that would disgrace the lowest of her sex, and led the weak and erring into a labyrinth of sin, ending in ruin and disgrace.

When Desbrow met Arlington on the following day, he told him of the conversation he had heard the night previous, without naming the interlocutors. The blush of anger, rather than of shame, rose to the cheek of Arlington, when he discovered how openly his position with Lady Walmer had been canvassed; and, selfish as he was, he felt pained, when the thought struck him of how *she* would have shrunk with dismay could she have heard the comments that Desbrow repeated. This thought softened him; and, with more of the warmth of

early years than Desbrow had seen him evince since their *entrée* into fashionable life, he grasped the hand of his friend, and owned that he loved, passionately loved, Lady Walmer.

"And have you ever reflected on the probable results of the indulgence of this guilty passion?" asked Desbrow. "Nay, has it not already led to the moral degradation of her you love? For the purpose of meeting her with greater facility, have you not joined her in the sinful and shameful league of intimacy with Lady Bronze, whose dupes you both equally are? for this vile person, who assists your liaison, would be the first to desert your unfortunate friend, Lady Walmer, if a discovery of her guilt took place; and more, would league with her foes against her, in order to screen herself from blame or suspicion for the odious part she had herself taken in it. Let me implore you, my dear Arlington, to conquer this unhallowed passion, ere it has involved the woman you love in ruin. I do not talk to you of the ruin you will bring on yourself, or the misery it will inflict on your excellent father, though another would probably dwell on these motives more strongly than the one I urge; but, as you say you love, passionately love, Lady Walmer, spare her, I beseech you, the wretchedness and disgrace that must fall on *her*, if you succeed in turning her from the path of duty. She is a proud woman, accustomed to meet respect at every side, and little able to support the world's dread laugh, or more dread pity."

"Spare me, Desbrow; spare me," said Arlington. "I feel all that you urge; and if I have as yet resisted the temptation to which I am exposed, it is because I have thought of her happiness more than my own, and dare not contemplate the possible, nay, too certain results which the gratification of my passion may entail on her."

"The season is nearly over," said Desbrow, "let us go to Scotland together, and remain there, until the hunting commences at Melton. I have hitherto declined accompanying you to either place, but now I am willing to devote my time to amusements, which you know are little to my taste, in order to remove you from a temptation that you may not always have sufficient force to resist."

"But how," said Arlington, "will my departure appear to *her* on whom all my movements have depended for the last four months? Will she not have cause to think me the most unworthy and volage of my sex, if at the moment I have won her, to avow that I am not indifferent to her,—an avowal that cost her so much to make,—I leave London without an expla-

nation with her? No! this I cannot do; a week ago it might have been; for then, I had not told her how I loved, though my attentions must have betrayed my feelings; but now her's are sacred to me, and must not be humiliated, as they inevitably would be, were I to depart without informing her that it is to save her that I go."

"Do not see her, then," said Desbrow, "write what you feel; and if Lady Walmer be the woman you take her to be, she will respect the sacrifice you make to preserve her honour and happiness."

It was settled that Arlington and Desbrow should leave London in three days for Scotland; and the former commenced the painful task of writing to Lady Walmer.

The good advice of Desbrow would have had little chance of being attended to, had not Arlington observed in the character of her he loved, a natural *fierté*, which not even the passion she was reciprocating to had been able to subdue; and now, that Desbrow's representation had brought the possible result of their attachment more visibly before his eyes, he shrank from the fearful responsibleness of involving a proud and sensitive woman in a position in which she would have to encounter humiliation and sorrow, from which not all his devoted attachment could screen her. The conviction that he was saving her from future misery, alone enabled him to withstand seeing her again, or gave him courage to write her his adieu. Perhaps the proudest moment, though far from being the happiest, of his life, was that when he had dispatched the letter, and thus triumphed over his own selfish feelings.

Lady Walmer was one of the handsomest women in England, highly accomplished, and possessing great fascination of manners. She had married, in early youth, Lord Walmer, —a man of large fortune and little mind, who devoted the slight portion of intellect he possessed, to field sports, during eight months in the year, and the other four were pretty equally divided between the clubs, theatres, and House of Lords. Lady Walmer had been spoiled by a doting mother; as an only daughter and a beauty, the vain parent had indulged all her caprices. She learned only what she liked; and as she only liked music, drawing, and novel reading, her studies were chiefly confined to these accomplishments. Early impressed with a belief of her own importance, which her great personal beauty, even more than her high connexions, tended to confirm, she seemed to consider the society into which she

was introduced at seventeen, as a theatre where she was to enact the *role* of premier actress, to the general satisfaction of an admiring audience. Her personal attraction gained her many suitors; from whom she selected Lord Walmer, because he was the best looking, and best dressed man amongst them. In return he was proud to call her his wife, she being the most admired young belle about town, whose possession all his set would consequently envy him. They fancied that they loved each other, and did not discover their mistake until nearly two months after it was irremediable. The discovery was made, like many similar ones, after a few weeks' residence, tête-à-tête, in the country, when ample time and scope is provided for acquiring a knowledge of defects, which, if detected *before* instead of *after* marriage, might prevent many an indissoluble knot from being ever tied, and save many an unhappy couple from *yawns*, if not *sighs*, in after years. Lady Walmer found that her lord was very *tiresome*; while he felt that he was only very *tired* of matrimony, or the country; which it was, he had not quite determined.

"Do you not observe that the days are interminably long, my dear William?" asked Lady Walmer of her lord, one evening during their *séjour* at his fine seat, as, with a suppressed yawn, converted into a sigh, she tried to find out the most comfortable corner of the *bergère*, in which she was reclining."

"Why yes, my love," replied the husband, "I have observed it; but, pardon my frankness, I think the fault is yours."

"Mine! mine!" repeated Lady Walmer, while her heightened colour, and eyes opened to their utmost extent, proved the astonishment she felt at the accusation. "Pray explain," continued she, "how *I*, who, a few weeks, nay, days ago, could, as you said, give wings to time, can so soon have discovered the power of clipping them, and of applying lead to his feet?"

"Do not feel offended at my candour," said Lord Walmer; "but the truth is, it appears to me that you are not formed for the country."

"By your deprecating my wrath," rejoined the lady, "it would appear that there was something to be angry at, though, for my part, I should have taken the observation as a compliment."

"Why, I meant," said Lord Walmer, "that you don't like walking through the grounds."

"Agreed," interrupted Lady Walmer; "but I propose an amendment,—say that *I hate* walking through neglected pleasure grounds, where dead leaves are whirled over my feet at every step, and thorns pierce my shoes."

"Because," interrupted her husband, "you would, in spite of my advice, persist in walking in silk slippers, instead of shoes adapted to the occasion."

"I detest thick shoes!" replied the lady; "but I detest still more having your abominable dogs jumping up on my dress! and, when I am talking to you, to be interrupted by 'So ho, poor fellow! there's a good dog!' or 'Come here, Neptune.' I like a walk similar to those we used to enjoy at the Zoological Gardens on a Sunday, when all your attention was given to *me*, and when we met all our acquaintances. You could then admire my dress, find out that I was looking well; but now," —and here she looked angry,—"you think of nothing but horses, or dogs; and I have caught you twice looking at your betting-book; and thrice have you been on the point of going to sleep, while I was singing your favourite song."

"Well, I must say, Lady Walmer," replied her husband, which was the first time he had given her that title, "that you are not very good-natured. You take no interest in the things I like. Every man is fond of horses and dogs; therefore, there is nothing peculiar in my attachment to them."

"But does every man bore his wife with them?" asked the lady.

"I am sorry I have bored you," replied the husband coldly.

"I expected," said Lady Walmer, "that you would have read to me when I was tired of talking, or hearing you talk. I had the most amusing new French novels; but you declined, and sat silent opposite to me, only interrupting my sombre reflexions by retailing to me some of the 'bon mots' of Crockford's, or chaste plaisanteries of White's. Now, in London, you used to read the passages I had marked in all the new novels, admired all that I admired, and never allowed a moment to hang heavy on my hands."

"By all means let us return, then," said Lord Walmer.

"Oh! pray do," said the lady, and the prospect of their approaching departure from solitude was so agreeable to both, that they became more cheerful than they had been for the last six days; and mutually agreed that nothing was so conducive to ill-humour and discontent as the country. In short, they discovered that Walmer Hall was a most disagreeable

place, and internally vowed never to return to it, except with a large party in the shooting season.

Neither discovered any fault in self, though the defects in the other were very visible to each; and in proportion to such discoveries, was the increased appreciation of self, and depreciation of the other.

With this solid foundation for erecting the brittle structure of domestic happiness, Lord and Lady Walmer returned to society; and plunged into its vortex with an avidity that proved how much their temporary retirement had enhanced its charms. They mutually declared to their London friends, how bored they had been in the country; and implied, by their dislike of it, that their honey-moon resembled not even a *treacle* moon, as a late celebrated poet was wont to call it, but had more of vinegar and opium than of sweets in it.

Both being good-tempered, and possessing ample means for indulging their tastes, their lives passed in a round of amusements, without being embittered by the disagreements that too often ensue, when Hymen has joined those whom Cupid has not united. Lady Walmer, content with being considered one of the reigning belles à la mode, wished not to exchange general for individual admiration; and had, until her acquaintance with Arlington, escaped unscathed by love, or scandal. Indeed, she thought herself secure from both; *but* what woman can defy the snares of the wily archer, unless incased in the armour of religion and strict moral principle? The attentions of Arlington had created an interest for him in her breast, before she was aware that those attentions meant more than the general assiduities she was accustomed to receive: for he had sufficient tact to perceive that a premature disclosure of his passion might defeat its object. It was not therefore until he had so accustomed her to receive his attentions, and that they became almost necessary to her, that he dared to breathe into her ear the unhallowed avowal. "The woman who deliberates is lost," is a received axiom; and the wife who listens to a declaration of love, has already lost the mental purity, which ought to be her safeguard; for even, if she have sufficient virtue to refrain from farther concessions, she must have betrayed a levity incompatible with her duty, or no man could have dared to hazard such a measure,—and "he comes too near who comes to be denied."

In listening to Arlington's avowal with complacency, Lady Walmer never contemplated that the passion she was thus en-

couraging could lead to any more serious consequences than the countless similar ones she saw tolerated in the society in which she lived. But who speculates upon consequences, when the heart, or the vanity, are interested? She was one of the innumerable instances of the fatal effects of that demoralizing system, so generally pursued at present, of permitting, by tacit acquiescence, the existence of liaisons which, some years ago, would have driven a woman from society, the present toleration of which encourages her in a conduct that merits her expulsion from it. Arlington's letter, announcing his departure, opened her eyes to the precipice on which she stood; and she drew back affrighted from the danger she had escaped; but piqued that she owed her escape to the forbearance of her lover, instead of to her own virtue and prudence. With woman's vanity, she wished that *she* had triumphed over the reason, as well as the heart of Arlington, and that she had the power of then repulsing him,—which power she flattered herself she possessed,—and of proving to him she was not the weak woman he believed her to be.

Alas! we are never so weak as when we count most on our strength! and Lady Walmer, in giving way to pique rather than gratitude towards Arlington, proved the truth of this adage. "How absurd!" thought she; "he seems to have taken for granted, that in return for his violent passion, I was ready to sacrifice my honour and peace;" never reflecting, that in countenancing that passion she had stained the first, and risked the second. "How I long to meet him again, if only to prove how ill he judged me. I certainly liked him; but, the idea of abandoning my home and my station—(her husband was not thought of)—never entered into my head. What! give up my brilliant position to become a *divorcée*,—an outcast of society!—Poor Arlington little knows me, when he thinks it possible."

Thus has reasoned many a woman in similar circumstances, whose imprudence has led to the terrible result she dared not contemplate, until condemned to support all its misery and obloquy. Vanity had seared the feelings of Lady Walmer; and she could not appreciate the motives that led Arlington to fly from her presence, while she had tolerated his passion. She determined to seek him again, and, by her blandishments, bring him once more to her feet, more in love than ever; and then, *she* would show him that *she* could command her feelings, and either banish the love, or the lover, for ever from her mind.

CHAPTER VI.

"Le besoin d'émotions est pour nous ce que l'opium est pour les Orientaux."

Desbrow and Arlington set off for Scotland, the one, satisfied with himself and his friend, for the sacrifice that friend had made; and the other, casting "many a longing, lingering look behind," at her he had left, and left with the consciousness of being beloved by ——. One thought alone consoled him, and that was, the conviction that *she* would understand and value the motives of his flight. Was that flight not the most indubitable proof of his love?—a proof that a high-minded and delicate woman, such as he believed Lady Walmer to be, could not fail to appreciate? And he gloried in the idea that this sacrifice would render him dearer than ever to her, to whose happiness and honour it was offered up.

We will not describe the journey, which passed like most journies undertaken in a luxurious travelling carriage, with a friend to converse with, when the desire for conversation is entertained; and the pockets and net of the carriage stored with the last new publications.

At Edinburgh they fell in with a few men of fashion; who, like themselves, had anticipated the close of the London, and the commencement of the grouse season, and were bestowing their tediousness on the modern Athens, instead of whiling it away in their accustomed haunts in London. But the old enemy,—ennui,—followed them to the North; and they yawned scarcely less there than in the metropolis from which they had escaped, unconscious that locomotion only lulls it to sleep for a short time, to awaken with increased force.

Arlington and Desbrow proceeded to the Duke of Clydesdale's, where they were engaged to pass some time; and where they found the usual assortment of political and fashionable aristocrats, enlivened by an admixture of a few of the neighbouring gentlemen, whose racy accents, and manifold Scotticisms, added piquancy to the dulness of conversation, so prevalent in the society of the haut ton.

The Duke of Clydesdale had no less than five unmarried daughters, all as remarkable for their personal attractions, as

for the amiable desire of displaying them, and of rendering themselves agreeable to the unmarried male visitors of their noble father, to whose different tastes and characters they assimilated their own, for the time being, with a tact peculiar to untochered lassies, of noble birth, but ignoble fortunes. It was edifying to hear the grave bachelor of a certain age, observe what a sensible and charming person the Lady Madeline was; how much she liked domestic life, and was calculated to adorn it; while some young peer, who had only completed his majority, swore that she was the most delightful mad-cap in the world, and just the sort of wife to take to Melton.

Not a particle of jealousy existed between the two sisters; on the contrary, they played admirably into each others' hands, considering all the unmarried men who came to Clydesdale Castle as fair game to try their talents on, and marriage as the aim and end of all their manœuvres. They communicated their discoveries of the tastes and dispositions of the men to each other; and Lady Madeline has been known to resign a conquest, half-achieved, to Lady Jeanet, on having found out that the latter had been flirting with a man who had expressed a greater admiration for herself, of which her sister had judiciously informed her. The young ladies' powers of pleasing were, however, tried in vain on the occupied heart of Arlington; and Desbrow was too well schooled, to permit his being the dupe of these female Prôteuses, who had sufficient quickness of perception to discover, that in neither of the friends should they find a husband.

Two days after their arrival, the Marquis and Marchioness of Ayrshire, with a young female relative of the latter, joined the party at Clydesdale Castle; and their presence was hailed, not only as an addition, but an acquisition to the party. Lady Ayrshire, no longer in the zenith of that beauty which had made her the most brilliant star of the English Court, for the last seventeen years, possessed a charm of manner, joined to good sense and a highly cultivated mind, that rendered her a general favourite in society. Mademoiselle de Bethune, her relative, was the daughter of a French nobleman of ancient family, who had married the cousin of the marchioness; and who, having lost her while his daughter was yet an infant, at the dying request of his wife, confided his child to the care of Lady Ayrshire.

Mademoiselle de Bethune was now in her seventeenth year; beautiful as the beau-ideal of the painter, or the dream of the

young poet, and with an unconsciousness of her beauty, that lent her new charms, by leaving her unconstrained, and graceful in her movements as infancy itself, with the modesty that belongs to innocence alone.

Cecile de Bethune was rather above than below the middle stature; her form slight, but finely rounded, with feet and hands that might have served as a model to the sculptor. Her complexion was delicately fair; her eyes large, dark, and lustrous; her hair black, and brilliant as the wing of the raven, when illumined by the sun; and her teeth regular and white as pearls. When to these attractions are added eye-brows, whose long jetty arches lent expression to the brilliant orbs beneath them, shaded with eye-lashes, that softened but obscured not their lustre; and lips, whose bright colour made the cheeks near them look pale, we cannot wonder that Cecile de Bethune was never seen without exciting admiration, nor known without being loved. Her education had been as judicious as the good sense and experience of Lady Ayrshire, who superintended, was calculated to make it; and the yearly visits to London had allowed her to receive the lighter accomplishments that London masters excel in bestowing. The death of her mother had given a tinge of seriousness to the character of Cecile, that accorded well with the peculiar style of her beauty; while the affectionate tenderness of Lady Ayrshire had awakened in her heart sentiments of gratitude and love, which were evinced in a thousand ways, as delightful to that amiable woman, as they were spontaneous in her charming ward.

Arlington was in the library at Clydesdale Castle, when Lord and Lady Ayrshire with Mademoiselle de Bethune arrived; and when going to dress for dinner, he could not resist walking into Desbrow's room, who had entered late from a long ride, to inform him of the new arrival, and to expatiate on the beauty and grace of the young stranger.

"Now is the moment come," said Arlington, "when your stoicism is to be conquered, and by a French woman, for no disengaged heart can resist the attractions of Mademoiselle de Bethune."

"How little do you know me," replied Desbrow, "if you imagine that I am to be caught by mere beauty, and French beauty too, which is that, which I least admire. No, *un joli petit minois chiffonné*, with lively eyes and high cheek-bones; *un nez à la Roxalane*, and a mouth determined on showing the teeth that belong to it, is not at all to my taste. I no more

dread the power of this belle Française over my heart, than that of the five belles, who have been so obstinately bent on enslaving it ever since I came here."

The praises of Arlington had disposed Desbrow to think lightly of the beauty of Cecile; and, when he was presented to her before dinner, he scarcely allowed himself to look sufficiently at her, to discover whether Arlington's description was or was not exaggerated.

At dinner he found himself opposite to her, and could not help being struck with the extreme beauty of her countenance, and the admirable form of her head. He thought her, however, too pale, until some observation from the person next her, which he did not overhear, brought the roses to her cheek; and he then mentally acknowledged, what no man of taste ought ever to doubt,—namely, that a face in which the lily predominates, save when animation tinges it with a faint blush, is that which is to be most preferred in female beauty. Her graceful and unaffected deportment, and a certain dignified decorum of manner, which, while it repelled familiarity, discouraged not conversation, made themselves felt by Desbrow, and ere she had left the *salle-à-manger*, he had made up his mind that she was not only the most beautiful, but the most lady-like young person he had ever seen. The triumphant glances with which, from time to time, Arlington regarded him, as if to say, "you see I did not exaggerate her charms," annoyed him, and diminished the extent of his admiration. It was this ill-judged pertinacity on the part of Arlington, which defeated the end he wished to accomplish, of leading Desbrow to admire Cecile, which he could not fail to do, had he been left to discover all her attractions by himself, without their being obtruded on his attention by the injudicious zeal of his friend.

We are always less prone to admit the perfection of those for whom our approbation is demanded; and many a woman has appeared comparatively plain in our eyes, from having heard her charms extolled, whose beauty might otherwise have been readily admitted.

When the gentlemen joined the ladies in the drawing-room, Desbrow remained at the corner the most remote from that part which Mademoiselle de Bethune occupied. Lady Ayrshire was seated near him, conversing with the Duke of Clydesdale, and he unintentionally found himself a listener to their conversation.

"Suppose we go into the music-room," said the duke; "my

girls generally sing for us, and I make no doubt Mademoiselle de Bethune is a proficient in music."

Now, be it known to our readers, that music was the *grand cheval de bataille*, of the young ladies of Clydesdale Castle; they had devoted many an hour to its acquirement, and as many more to its daily practice, so that they rarely met any competitors whom they did not far surpass in skill and science, in this their favourite, and indeed principal, accomplishment.

Hence their noble father and themselves thought, or affected to think, that music was the most essential part of a young lady's education, and that those who excelled not in it, were immeasurably behind them.

"I shall be delighted to hear the Ladies Urquhart sing," said Lady Ayrshire, "but Mademoiselle de Bethune is not a proficient in music, though she is fond of it."

"How strange!" replied the duke, with a smile of self-complacency; "it appears to me that a proficiency in music is absolutely indispensable in a young lady, and I wonder your ladyship has neglected to attend to it, in Mademoiselle de Bethune's education.

"Why, to say the truth," said Lady Ayrshire, "the time required for attaining a proficiency alarmed me, and there are so many branches of education which I consider still more essential than music, that I sacrificed it to them. Nor have I had any reason to regret this determination, as my Cecile can sing and play quite well enough to please the few friends before whom she would not object to perform."

A contemptuous smile stole across the features of the duke, as he offered his arm to conduct Lady Ayrshire to the music-room; but Desbrow, who had not missed a word of the conversation, turned with increased interest to look at the beautiful Cecile, and felt an increased respect for Lady Ayrshire, whose sentiments with regard to mere accomplishments so exactly coincided with his own.

The Ladies Urquhart favoured the company with many of the most difficult duets and trios of the Italian school, and even those accustomed to the voice of a Pasta or Malibran, might have listened with pleasure to them; though such auditors must have felt that they would have compromised for less science, and a little more *sentiment*, in their singing, as in this last desideratum they were rather deficient.

The unaffected admiration Mademoiselle de Bethune betrayed at the performance of the Ladies Urquhart, impressed Desbrow with a favourable opinion of her disposition, and the more so,

as her appreciation of a science in which she excelled not herself, proved her perfect freedom from the envy so often attributed to her sex.

He drew near her, as if controlled by some magnetic attraction, which he could not resist, and, as he stood behind her, suffered his eyes to dwell with a pleasure as new to him as it was delightful, on her graceful form and ivory shoulders.

He was startled from this contemplation by observing her lovely face and bust reflected in a large mirror at the opposite side, and the expression of her countenance varying with the music, now animated, the next moment pensive, appeared to him almost angelic.

When the Ladies Urquhart had ceased their performance, they pressed Mademoiselle de Bethune to sit down to the harp or piano-forte; and urged her with a perseverance almost obstinate, in defiance of her simple reiterated declaration, that "she was so little of a proficient in music that she never played or sang in society, and consequently could not attempt doing either after the admirable performance to which she had been listening."

Desbrow thought the voice and accents in which her refusal was uttered, was the most harmonious he had ever heard, and he never so cordially assented to the proverb which sayeth, "that a low and sweet voice is excellent in woman," as while she was speaking.

CHAPTER VII.

"Lorsqu'on gouverne des hommes, il ne faut jamais penser qu'à leurs faiblesses."

Among the guests at Clydesdale Castle, were Lord and Lady Arden, or, as they were more generally distinguished, Lady and Lord Arden, the lady always taking precedence of her husband, who was thrown into the back-ground, not by the superiority, but the pretensions of *madame son épouse*,—pretensions which his love of quiet, and knowledge of the pertinacity of the lady in maintaining them, prevented him from ever calling into question. Lord Arden was a man of highly cultivated mind,

considerable abilities, and most amiable disposition. Having been in his youth a great admirer of beauty, that of his wife, which had been of the first order, captivated his fancy, and while its first effects were in their zenith, she acquired an influence over him, never after to be disputed.

This beauty, which had enabled her to reign despotically over his heart, she looked on with much the same feelings with which despotic sovereigns regard the divine right of kings, knowing that its basis is founded on the weakness of their subjects.

The universal attachment which the good qualities of Lord Arden excited in the breasts of all his friends, extended the empire of his arbitrary wife. All who wished to show that respect to him which his talents and amiability merited, were compelled to submit to the caprices of her ladyship, who took advantage of the affection entertained for her husband by his friends, to treat them with an imperiousness as offensive as it was ill-judged.

Finding her caprices submitted to, they daily increased, and far from attributing the forbearance she experienced to its real cause, she viewed it as a conclusive proof of her own superiority, and tyrannized still more over her excellent husband.

The first evening of her arrival, the family were rather surprised at seeing, in addition to the usual suite of domestics, a femme de chambre, valet de chambre, and footman, the unusual addition of a page and house-maid. The former to attend to my lady's private silver case of sauces, essences, salt, &c., &c., for dinner, prepared by the cook at Arden House, as she never trusted to strange cook or butlers.

Antonio, for so the page was named, stood behind her chair at dinner, anticipated her wants, with zealous tact; served her with mocha coffee after the repast, and while she enjoyed her half hour's siesta on a sofa, gently rubbed her feet, the motion of his hand, as she was heard to observe, "inducing that light slumber which enabled her to get through the fatigues of the evening." The house-maid was the only person she had ever met with, who really understood making a bed, and therefore she never moved without her, for after all, as Lady Arden frequently observed, "comfort was the grand essential of life, and to those who could contribute to it, she was willing to submit. This is the true secret of life," she continued. "Witness its workings.—Lord Arden would be truly uncomfortable were I not pleased; to prevent his being so, *therefore*, he submits to me. *I* should be uncomfortable if my femme de chambre was out of

humour, because she has a bad temper, and displays it most disagreeably. Consequently, to prevent my being made uncomfortable, *I* submit to her; and the servants are obliged to do the same,—so, that you see that the love of comfort obliges us all to make sacrifices."

The morning after her arrival, Lady Arden complained of a violent tooth-ache; all the remedies used on such occasions were applied, but still she found no relief. At length she decided on sending to Edinburgh, a distance of fifty miles from Clydesdale Castle, for a dentist, to extract the suffering tooth, and, when he arrived, she declared, "that her nerves were unequal to submitting to the operation unless she saw it performed on some one else first."

The few friends admitted to the sanctuary of her boudoir, looked aghast at this declaration, each expecting to be called on; but, after the silence of a few minutes, and no one offering, she told Lord Arden that *he* must have a tooth out, that she might judge from *his* manner of supporting the operation if *she* could go through it. He appeared amazingly disconcerted, but a few wry faces and serious expostulations having failed to mollify the lady, the kind husband submitted, and a fine sound tooth was extracted from his jaw; after which she declared "That she had seen enough to convince her that she could not undergo a similar operation."

Lord Scamper, famous at Molton, and no where else, was another of the guests at Clydesdale Castle.

Lady Arden declared that he was unbearable, his language only fit for the stable, and worse than all, that he used lavender water on his handkerchief; she requested that he might be placed as far from her at table as possible, while he whispered to Lady Madeline, that "Lady Arden seemed a very odd person, and reminded him of his famous mare Juno, who was shy of strangers, and would only be fed from the hands of a little groom boy in his stable, just as Lady Arden would only be served by her page."

Some one having talked of a new poem much read, Lord Scamper shook his head, and said "There was only one really interesting poem in our language." Half a dozen people asked him to name it, as all were curious to hear the opinion of a person whose judgment on horses or dogs, alone was considered sound.

"Somerville's Chase!" was triumphantly quoted by him, as his favourite; "indeed," added he, with naïveté, "I never could get through any other poem, as they always set me to sleep."

Lady Rosina Urquhart, with an insinuating smile, meant to captivate Mr. Stuart, a young Scotchman of large fortune, on whose heart she had certain designs, and whose taste in poetry she had, with the quickness of perception peculiar to herself and sisters, already discovered, observed that "The Bride of Abydos" was, in her opinion, a most exquisite poem.

"Why, as to that," said Lord Scamper, "I once heard it read aloud, that is to say, between whiles,—when I was awaked by the exclamations of the ladies who were present, and when it was over, and they all were moved to tears, I asked them the simple question, of why the poem was called *Bride* of Abydos? for, as far as I could discover, there was no marriage at all in the case. They were all very angry at my remark, but I like to be exact; and when I find such mistakes, I cry out against being taken in."

Lady Jeanet, who respected the rent-roll of Lord Scamper, however she might despise his mental qualifications, remarked, "That it was very true,—it was wrong to entitle Zuleika, a bride, as she was not married;" and she was thanked by an approving smile from Lord Scamper, who, encouraged by her assent, launched forth into critique,—if critique it could be called,—on the other poems of Lord Byron.

"'Childe Harold,'" he pronounced "to be a fanciful spoiled boy, who knew not what he wanted, who left England in disgust, —more shame for him,—and found, in every country he visited, the ennui he tried to escape from: had he tried Melton, he would never have left England. 'The Giaour' was a desperado, influenced only by two passions,—*love* and *vengeance*,—a rascal," added Lord Scamper, "who in England would have been subject for the surgeons, instead of subject for the poet. 'The Corsair,'" continued he, "was no more or less than a pirate. Now, I say that I see little good in exciting sympathy for persons whose crimes merit a gibbet, and whom a jury of twelve honest men would EXALT in a different, though less poetical, way than Byron has done. 'Lara' is another false hero, all mystery and moonshine; and yet our ladies weep over the recital of actions and crimes, which, if told in plain prose, without the charm of fine words and images, would excite their detestation; and gentlemen read with admiration of actions, which, if called on as honest men on the bench of magistrates to judge, they would punish with the utmost severity of the laws, which such culprits had violated."

"But will you not admit," asked Lady Arden (somewhat amused with the plain matter-of-fact view Lord Scamper had

taken of Lord Byron's heroes), "that 'Parisina' is a tale full of interest?"

"Not more so," replied Lord Scamper, "than half the trials in actions of damages, except that the heroine chooses the son of her husband for her lover. Now, if I saw a wife or sister of mine weep over the fate of such a jade as Parisina, I should rate her soundly; and the ladies who do pity such jades, and in their boudoirs melt over the story, would be the first to turn their backs on one of their less guilty countrywomen, nay, attack her with severity, as if to prove their own purity. 'Beppo' has less humbug in it than any of the rest of Byron's poems, and therefore I like it best; but as for 'Manfred,' he is the most crazy, improbable personage that ever a poet took it into his head to paint,—a blockhead that believes in sorcery, and speechefies to mountains and rocks, and whose insinuated crimes not only ought to have prevented his being made a hero of, but ought to have led to his being shut up in a madhouse."

"Why, as to the belief in sorcery," said Mr. M'Tagart, "that is, I admit, too ridiculous. I canna eemagine, hoo a man can give in to sich superstition. If 'Manfred' had believed in the second sight, there would be some sense in it."

"Oh! would to Heaven," exclaimed Lady Arden, in *sotto voce*, "that we had some Meleager here to destroy this Caledonian bore, who interrupts yonder Nimrod in the midst of his sapient reflections."

"But how comes it, my lord," asked Lady Arden, determined not to allow M'Tagart to continue, "that you, who stated that all poems, except Somerville's Chase, set you to sleep, can have acquired such a knowledge,—I won't say an accurate one,—of Lord Byron's poems?"

"Well, as you have asked the question," replied Lord Scamper, "I don't mind telling you the fact. When I found wherever I went, that people were always talking of Byron's works, and entering into details about them, I felt so cursedly foolish, knowing nothing of the subject, that I employed one of my solicitor's clerks,—a clever lad,—to write me down a concise account of the character of each hero, plain matter-of-fact, leaving out all descriptions and fine words. What I have told you is an abridgment of what the lad wrote; and when I found that all England were admiring persons, whose crimes our laws would have punished so severely, I asked myself if it was not a shame for a man, and a peer too, to lend his genius to excite that sympathy for guilt which should only be given to honour and virtue."

A smile of contempt played over the haughty countenance of Lady Arden, which Lord Scamper observing, he added, "Your ladyship may smile at my opinions; but when I tell you that I got the clever lad I mentioned to draw out a case for each of the characters, and to submit it for counsel's opinion; and that the opinion was that each of the imaginary persons named would be liable to the severest penalty of the laws, you will admit that I do not speak without some knowledge of the matter. None of us feel much pity for smugglers, poachers, or murderers, in real life; then why should we sympathize so much with villains in poetry?"

The gentlemen laughed; the ladies, with the exception of Lady Jeanet, dissented from Lord Scamper's matter-of-fact opinions; but she looked approval, and he seemed satisfied with her approbation.

The attention that Lady Arden engrossed was extremely offensive to the Ladies Urquhart; and they gave vent to the ire it excited, in expressions in which none of the peculiarities of her ladyship were spared. The good-nature and gentleness with which Mademoiselle de Bethune endeavoured to find excuses for the arbitrary lady, and to deprecate the complaining ones, increased still more strongly the favourable impression she had made on Desbrow.

On leaving the music-room, some of the party assembled round a table covered with albums, filled with drawings by the Ladies Urquhart, and the admiration of the guests was elicited for the performances of each.

Desbrow approached and offered to turn over the leaves of the album for Mademoiselle de Bethune, and they examined the drawings together; this led to a conversation, in which the justness of her remarks, and the modesty and gentleness with which they were made, still more captivated him. The Ladies Urquhart interchanged significant glances, as they observed the attention Desbrow was paying to Mademoiselle de Bethune, and Arlington enjoyed it, while, at a little distance, he affected to be occupied in looking over a portfolio.

A view of a scene in France led Desbrow to ask Mademoiselle de Bethune if she had been lately in her native country; and he remarked at the same time, that she spoke English so perfectly, that it was only by her name that he knew she was French. A blush and smile repaid him for the observation, while she added, that nearly all her life had been passed in England; and having had an English mother, and adopted mother, she considered herself more than half English, though

a dear father and brother in France often reminded her she was a French woman, and called her thoughts and affections to her native country.

Desbrow retired for the night, his head and heart occupied by the beautiful Cecile; and his valet de chambre remarked, when assisting his toilette next morning, that he had never before seen his master half so fastidious. Desbrow smiled as he detected his own attention to the becoming in his dress, and rejoiced that Arlington was not present to observe and banter him.

A morning *déshabillé*, that trial to female beauty, and a morning sun, which so few even of the fairest can bear, brightly beaming on her countenance, increased rather than diminished the charms of Mademoiselle de Bethune, which never appeared to greater advantage than in the simple white morning dress, leaving only her fair throat and beautiful hands uncovered, while her raven hair, in all its silken luxuriance, fell in spiral ringlets round her polished temples, and shaded, but hid not, the delicate rose of her cheeks. Desbrow could scarcely withdraw his eyes from her; and when her mild glances met his, the soft blush that suffused her face as she withdrew them, betrayed that she was conscious of occupying much of his attention, and not displeased by it.

After breakfast, an equestrian excursion was proposed; and some of the ladies consented to join it. Desbrow had decided the day before on going to shoot, and had made all the necessary arrangements with the keepers; but when he heard Mademoiselle de Bethune assent to make one of the riding party, he immediately determined to ride also; and not even the arch smile of Arlington had power to prevent his eagerly seeking to place himself as near Cecile as he could, in the gay cavalcade that left the castle.

They proceeded to view a ruined abbey, whose picturesque appearance the Ladies Urquhart loudly commended, and had perpetuated in many a drawing; and, in justice to them, we must add, the view of the original proved the correctness of their pencils.

Having explored the ruin, admired the delicate tracery of its arched windows, and the vivid draperies of ivy that adorned them, the party proceeded homewards by a different route, following the windings of the river. The road was narrow and uneven, being nothing more than a track for horse or foot passengers, and often approaching the edge of the steep bank

of the rapid river. The party were obliged to proceed singly; and Mademoiselle de Bethune and Desbrow, who had been engaged in an interesting conversation, found themselves at a little distance behind the others. In passing a very abrupt turn of the path, the bank, which had been undermined by the water, gave way, and Cecile and her horse were precipitated into the river, the horse plunging violently to disengage himself from his rider, who, with great presence of mind, maintained her seat, though the force of the current, and the efforts of the struggling animal, rendered it a most difficult task. To throw himself from his horse and jump into the river, was the work of a moment with Desbrow; who being an expert swimmer, hoped to be able to seize the bridle of Cecile's horse, and turn its head to the shore, from which the current was carrying it. But the violent exertions it made, burst the girths, and its helpless rider, instantaneously overwhelmed in the eddying circles of the water, was sinking to rise no more, when, with a desperate effort, Desbrow seized her, and bore her to the shore; where, exhausted and breathless, he placed his precious burthen, and then sank nearly as lifeless as her he had saved.

It was some minutes ere the united efforts of all the party could restore animation to Cecile, during which time Desbrow, who had recovered from the momentary prostration of his strength, hung over her in distraction, pressing the water from her streaming tresses, and chafing her cold hands. By degrees her cheek assumed a less deadly tint, her heart again commenced its pulsations, and opening her languid eyes, she fixed them for a moment on Desbrow, with an expression of grateful tenderness which sank into his heart. She then closed them again, overcome by the exertion she had made, while a pearly drop escaped each snowy lid, and the lips moved as if speaking, though no sound escaped them.

Lord Ayrshire, in the warmth of his gratitude for the safety of Cecile, pressed again and again the hands of Desbrow.

"How shall I thank you? what shall we do to prove our gratitude?" exclaimed he, while Desbrow, returning the pressure, added—

"Am I not more than repaid in seeing her again restored to life?"

A servant was dispatched to Clydesdale Castle to order a carriage, and the necessary change of dress for Mademoiselle de Bethune, with strict injunctions to conceal the imminent

danger to which she had been exposed, as Lord Ayrshire dreaded the effect it might produce on his wife, even though assured of her safety.

Cecile had now recovered, and was able to thank her preserver by words as well as by looks, but the latter were still more expressive; and when Desbrow pressed the hand she extended to him to his lips, it was not withdrawn, nay, he thought, but it might be only fancy, that a gentle pressure returned his ardent grasp.

This event, so nearly being attended by the most fatal consequences, produced an effect on the feelings of the two persons,—the saved and saver,—which it might have taken months to establish. Desbrow felt as if he was privileged to hope that he might protect the life he had preserved; and Cecile, the pure-minded and affectionate Cecile, thought she was only obeying the dictates of gratitude, when she suffered her thoughts continually to revert to him, to whom, under heaven, she owed her safety.

Lord and Lady Ayrshire's feelings of thankfulness were as warm as their expressions of it, and Desbrow found himself treated by them not as a new acquaintance, but as an old and most valued friend, whose praises they were never tired of proclaiming. Happily no illness followed the accident; and a little languor, which stole nothing from the charms of Cecile's beautiful countenance, was all the injury she sustained from it.

Lady Madeline said, that "Mademoiselle de Bethune's recent accident resembled an incident in a novel. When I saw Mr. Desbrow," continued she, "with one arm supporting Mademoiselle de Bethune, and with the other cleaving the current, whose force threatened every moment to overwhelm them, I thought it was just such a scene as one reads of."

"And I," said Lord Scamper, "was reminded of the famous day we had at Melton last year, when I swam the Smite on Sky Scraper, bearing the brush triumphantly, which I had twice risked my life to secure that day. It was a glorious sight."

Lady Jeanet put on a look of intense interest, and the gratified fox-hunter repaid it by increased attentions to her.

When the visit of the Ayrshires drew near to its close, they invited Desbrow and his friend to accompany them to their seat in the neighbourhood,—an invitation too agreeable to be resisted.

The three weeks they had spent together at Glydesdale Castle, had cemented an affection which the brevity of the date of

their acquaintance, under other circumstances, might never have achieved; and Desbrow only waited a favourable opportunity to declare his sentiments to the fair object who had inspired them, and to demand her permission to make them known to Lord and Lady Ayrshire.

"How strange," said Lady Madeline to her sisters, "that Mademoiselle de Bethune, who took no pains whatever to captivate Mr. Desbrow, should have so completely succeeded in doing so, and in so short a time. I really begin to believe that it is better not to lay one's self out to please, and let things take their natural course; for if successful, we have the satisfaction of knowing that the success was not acquired at the expense of fatiguing efforts to win it; and if otherwise, one has not the mortification of feeling that our efforts to please have been practised in vain.

"I believe you are right," said Lady Jeanet, "for after all, there is nothing so tiresome as being always on the *qui vive* to please; we have danced all night to catch some booby who professed to dote on Terpsichore, and who having only claimed our hands for a night, has claimed for life that of some indolent damsel, incapable of such a sacrifice. We have ridden over moor and mountain, fearless as Amazons, in the chase of the heart or hand of some modern Nimrod, who has bestowed it on some inanimate southern lass, who almost trembled to mount a pony. We have sung ourselves into hoarseness and sore throats, to witch with music, some *brutes*, over whom our harmonies produced less effect than did the sounds of Orpheus on his; and we have turned over albums of our drawings, until our fingers were as tired as our eyes in the operation, yet the amateurs have chosen wives who could draw nothing but purse-strings. Let us then abandon all active exertions to gain husbands, and leave it to chance."

"Then we shall never get married," said Lady Rosina, poutingly; "recollect that Mr. Desbrow is quite unlike the generality of young men, and though Mademoiselle de Bethune captivated him without any intention on her part, she might not, nay, would not, have succeeded with the greater number of the men of our acquaintance; who, instead of making love, require to be made love to, and only bestow a portion of their attention on women, in gratitude for having occupied so much of theirs. Men are twenty times more fond of admiration than we are; while we require it only for our persons or accomplishments, they demand it for their fortunes, positions, dress, equipages, horses, and all that is theirs, even to their *want* of

accomplishments, of which many of them are not a little vain, as witness how often we have been called on by some talentless booby, to join in his derision of some man of literary, musical, or conversational powers, while he thanked his stars that *he* was not of such. No, believe me, sister, that it is only by making men in love with *themselves*, that we can make them fancy themselves in love with us."

"Suppose," said Lady Madeline, laughing, "that we add swimming to the list of our accomplishments; for you see, how useful a tumble into the river can be made. But I would advise a proficiency in the art of diving in the watery element being acquired before the nymph tries the experiment, lest her attendant swain possess not the prowess of Mr. Desbrow."

"And so," said Lady Arden, "we have lost the fair Cecile, and, *pire que cela*, Lord Arlington and Mr. Desbrow, the modern Pylades and Orestes, have followed in her wake. Lord Arlington is a very gifted man, as men go now-a-days, and seemed to bear the absence of *la dame de ses pensées*, with great patience and resignation. Mr. Desbrow is quite an original, and if he fell into the hands of a clever woman, something might be made of him; but, *la belle Cecile, qui est douce comme un agneau*, is not the person to turn the caterpillar into a butterfly, though she bids fair to convert the bachelor into a Benedict."

CHAPTER VIII.

"The treasures of the deep are not so precious
As the concealed comforts of a man
Locked up in woman's love."

Each day of Desbrow's stay at Lord Ayrshire's, only served to render him still more attached to Mademoiselle de Bethune. His affections having never been frittered away by casual flirtations, were as fervent as they were fresh and pure, and he loved, as those only can love, who have arrived at maturity without having wasted the powers of their hearts, or blunted the delicacy of their feelings.

A new world opened before him; and Cecile was the enchantress that lent it all its charms. The future, blessed with

her, offered one bright vista, and without her, he dared not anticipate it. Nor was such a painful anticipation presented to him; for Cecile, the artless and pure-minded Cecile, was too unskilful in the world's wiles to conceal the preference he had excited in her heart, though that preference was displayed with a delicacy that made it doubly flattering. Desbrow was ever by her side, her drawings were confided to him, she sang and played the simple airs that charmed away many an evening hour; and he agreed with Lord and Lady Ayrshire, that if her voice wanted science, it amply compensated for it in sweetness and pathos.

Lord Arlington had joined a party at the moors, for a fortnight, leaving Desbrow the enraptured guest of Lord Ayrshire; and never was there a happier circle than the party *carré* at Ayrshire Abbey presented.

A few days after Lord Arlington's departure, Desbrow, while riding by the side of Cecile, at a little distance from the Ayrshires, poured into her ear the impassioned tale of his love, and received her blushing consent to confide it to them. But though for many days she had anticipated his avowal, it now agitated her, bringing mixed tears of pain and pleasure to her eyes, and the hand she allowed Desbrow to press in his for a moment, trembled so much in his grasp, that in pity to her embarrassment he did not attempt to raise it to his lips; and a look beaming with affection repaid him for his delicacy.

The moment Cecile found herself alone with Lady Ayrshire, she threw herself into her arms; and with a shower of tears wept on the almost maternal bosom, that had been, through infancy and girlhood, her refuge in joy or sorrow. She told her of Desbrow's declaration. She wept not alone, for her kind friend, her second mother, mingled tears with her's, as she anticipated her separation from the child of her affection, even though such a separation had always been inevitable; but they smiled through their tears, as they looked forward to constant meetings and spending many months of every year together.

Desbrow lost not a moment in laying his proposals before Lord Ayrshire, who warmly congratulated him on the choice he had made. It was agreed on that the Comte de Bethune should be immediately written to. Lord Ayrshire assured Desbrow that there could be no doubt of his assent, as the proposal had been accepted by them; adding, that he should inform Cecile's father that her suitor was all that a prudent parent could desire for his son-in-law.

The lovers being now considered affianced, and at liberty

to mutually reveal their feelings, each day, each hour, added to their attachment, by making known qualities that their increased intimacy developed. In Cecile de Bethune, the fastidious Desbrow found all that his imagination had ever pictured, or his reason approved of, in woman; while the dignified simplicity of his manners, and the high tone of his character and mind, were truly appreciated by her he had chosen.

When Arlington returned from the moors, he was no less surprised than gratified at observing the change in his friend and the cause that led to it; and while congratulating Desbrow, he could not resist demanding of him, if he were not now ready to admit the empire of the sly archer Love, whose shafts he had so long escaped.

In due time, a favourable answer arrived from the Comte de Bethune, giving his consent to the nuptials of his daughter, and requesting that, when they had taken place, Mr. Desbrow would bring her to France to visit him.

It was agreed that Desbrow should proceed to London to arrange the settlement with his lawyer, and that the Ayrshires were to follow him with their fair ward in a fortnight after. But the morning of his departure an express arrived, stating that Mr. Beaumont, the guardian of Desbrow, was dangerously ill, and urging his immediate presence.

We will not dwell on the parting scene between the lovers; the sadness of which was increased by the tidings that had clouded the brow of Desbrow, who was sincerely attached to his guardian, and had prepared Cecile to like him.

All partings are melancholy between those who have sensitive hearts; because they are felt to be the *avant-couriers* of that final parting on earth, when the survivor has the bitterest portion. Desbrow was obliged to summon all his self-command to his aid, when his travelling carriage drove round to the door, and he saw the cheek of his promised bride wear a paler hue, as a pearly tear stole down it. A sweet smile which struggled through tears, as does the sun through the showers of the vernal April, beamed on the lovely face of Cecile, as she offered her velvet cheek to the lips of Desbrow. He then tore himself away from the breakfast room, astonished at the depth of his emotion, at quitting, for only a few days, her who was so shortly to be all his own.

He travelled night and day until he reached the mansion of Mr. Beaumont. An old servant met him in the vestibule, and, to his hurried enquiry, answered that his poor master still lived, and was every hour demanding if Mr. Desbrow had arrived.

Desbrow followed him to the sick chamber, where, stretched on the bed of death, lay the friend who had long been to him as a parent: his languid eyes, over which the glassy film of death was spread, turned with instinctive impulse to the door of the chamber when it opened; and "is he yet come?" broke from the pale lips of the dying man, as his heaving heart rose with unequal movement, and his struggling breath almost refused to give an echo to his thoughts. His attenuated hands were convulsively plaiting the sheet that was turned over his coverlid, and the damps of death hung on his livid brow. A faint ray of joy illumined, for a moment, his sunken eyes, as they recognised Desbrow; his cold clammy hands returned the warm pressure of his young friend, as he gaspingly murmured, "I knew he would come—I knew he would come to—close my eyes—I am dying—my dear young friend—I have wrestled with death for the last few hours—because I wished to see you before I died.—It is now nearly over,—but I die as I have lived, an advocate for civil and religious liberty."

He paused; and a spasmodic pressure of the hand, and a convulsive movement of the muscles, followed by a heavy gasp, and a closing of the languid eye-lids, marked that the last struggle was over; and Desbrow looked on the inanimate remains of him who had, only a moment before, welcomed his approach. He gazed long and attentively on that pale face, on which the impress of earthly passion still lingered; and, as he slowly withdrew from the chamber of death, he prayed that he might never be doomed to witness the closing scene of aught dearer to him in life, since that of his poor friend filled him with such regret.

When the will was opened, it was found that Mr. Beaumont had left the whole of his large fortune to Desbrow, with the exception of ten thousand pounds to her who had clouded the horizon of his life, but who had never been forgotten; liberal provisions to his servants, and large sums for the endowment of a school, into which *only* the children of persons belonging to the established church were to be admitted. A considerable legacy was also bequeathed for the institution of a charity, into which the poor of his estates were to be received, *on condition* that they always voted for their landlord, or the candidate proposed by him. Desbrow sighed as he read this record of the prejudices of him who died professing his love of civil and religious liberty.

In the desk of Mr. Beaumont was found a letter addressed to Desbrow, instructing him to examine and destroy all his pri-

vate papers, and with it a small parcel, labelled " Notes from Frances." In lifting this parcel, a paper was discovered, containing a dried rose, almost reduced to dust, with an inscription nearly effaced, stating that it had been given him in June, 1788, by his dear Frances.

Love, disappointed love, was the secret of the misanthropy of poor Beaumont; and how many cases of misanthropy might be traced to similar causes, whose effects influence the lives of those who yield to them, long after the causes have ceased to be remembered. It is only susceptible natures that are liable to this species of infirmity,—an infirmity that always springs from disappointed affections,—and is therefore entitled to our pity, instead of being, as it generally is, at once the source and object of censure and calumny.

Desbrow felt a tear dim his eye, as it dwelt on this treasured relick of a first and only love,—this only flower,—in the wintry life of him who had preserved it; and he never felt so strong a sentiment of attachment towards his departed friend as at this moment, when the mementos of his tenderness of heart were before him. It is by the weaknesses, more than by their strength, that we are drawn towards our fellow-creatures; for, we not only all stand so much in need of pity and forbearance, but are generally so conscious of this necessity, that we find a chord in our hearts, which responds to that in others when it vibrates beneath the dissonant touch of misfortune.

With what compassion did Desbrow now look back to the movements of misanthropy he had so often witnessed in his poor friend, and grieve that he had not shown a more affectionate forbearance to them! Alas! we often pass our lives with persons whose failings we should be more disposed to pity than resent, could we but know the causes that led to them; but such is our pride, or our mutual want of confidence, that, even in the intimacy of friendship, we rarely lay open our feelings, even to those who could sympathize in them.

Desbrow now found himself the possessor of vast wealth, as the fortune of Mr. Beaumont, joined to his own, rendered him one of the wealthiest commoners in England; but his desires were so moderate, and his former fortune so free from all incumbrances, that his accession gave him little pleasure. He reflected with deep regret that his marriage must now be postponed for some time, as the respect due to the memory of his guardian, who had been a second father to him, demanded this sacrifice.

He wrote to Lord Ayrshire, informing him of the death of

Mr. Beaumout, and stating his feelings, He enclosed a letter for Cecile, in which, after pouring forth his whole heart to her, he intreated her to reply to him immediately; and, having performed the last melancholy duty to the remains of his deceased friend, he endeavoured to beguile the weary hours by fulfilling, to the utmost extent of his power, the intentions of Mr. Beaumont.

Arlington, who had left him on his route from Scotland, had gone to pay a visit at Lord Vavasour's, where the news of Mr. Beaumont's death reached him. Knowing the affection that Desbrow had always entertained for his guardian, and sympathizing in the feelings of regret which he knew his loss would occasion him, he wrote to offer Desbrow a visit: but the latter declined it for the present, as he had so much business on his hands, that he wished to finish it ere he left Beaumont Park; and therefore postponed their meeting until the ensuing month in London, where business would require the presence of both.

Desbrow waited with impatience for letters from Ayrshire Abbey; but day after day passed and not a letter arrived. At length, a week after the due time when an answer might have been expected to his letters, he was shocked and alarmed by receiving one with black-edged paper, and bearing all the insignia of death. Terror for some moments prevented his having the power to open it,—a thousand fearful thoughts passed through his mind,—his hand shook, and a presentiment of some heavy calamity took possession of him; and such was the overpowering effect of his agitation, that when he had torn open the letter, and saw the signature of Cecile, he clasped his hands, and uttered ejaculations of joy and thankfulness that she was safe. He once more took up the letter, and became filled with sorrow, when he perused the few lines in which the heart-stricken girl informed him that she had lost her second mother,—her dear and inestimable friend, Lady Ayrshire,—who had been hurried to the tomb by a violent cold, which, terminating in a fever, had in a few days put an end to her valuable existence. Lord Ayrshire, she added, was incapable of writing, and she felt nearly unequal to the melancholy task that devolved on her.

Desbrow read the letter over and over again;-it was the first he had ever received from Cecile; and a superstitious feeling which, in his present depressed spirits he could not subdue, stole over him, as he reflected that her first letter was to announce death,—a sombre omen, thought he, for the

future. The grief under which it was written precluded even the indications of that confidential and authorized affection, which previously to their separation they had so frankly and happily indulged. At each perusal he thought the style still more frigid and restrained, and blamed her for not even by implication referring to their position; forgetful that it was written in the house of death and mourning, and that grief alone occupied her who sent it, chasing away, for the moment, every other feeling.

Is it the presentiment of the brevity of sorrow that makes the mourner adhere with such tenacity to the first indulgence of its violence; when turning from all the consolation that love or friendship can offer, the heart and the imagination unite in cherishing the regret that is but the more bitter because it is vain?

Alas! such is our weakness, that even the violence of our emotions exhausts the griefs they evince; and we live to feel that the very deepest, truest regret may be subdued by time, though it leaves wounds whose cicatrices are ineffaceable. Who that has lost an object dear to the affections, but has felt the self-reproach, the remorse, with which we turn from the first indications of forgetfulness, as we ask ourselves, if it is *thus* we can forget all that was, and was most dear. Unstable must that mind be which views not life with an altered eye, after death has snatched from our circle some individual who made its happiness. That confidence in the possibility of the duration of earthly enjoyment, which in itself is happiness, has fled for ever, when we have bent over the cold remains of one we loved; for then comes the reflection, that so may perish every tie that binds us to life; and the mysterious chain by which memory links us to the loved dead, awakening thoughts which they once shared, precludes our forgetting that the flowers of earth only shade the graves that yawn beneath them.

Desbrow wrote to Cecile, and, from respect to her feelings of grief, suppressed every sentiment foreign to them. How did he wish that he was near her, to share, if not lighten, her sorrow! How did he desire to utter the thousand fond condolences which he could not write! But he dared not intrude on the privacy of Lord Ayrshire at such a moment, unbidden; and was therefore forced to restrain his impatience.

In a few weeks, came a letter from Lord Ayshire, informing him that the Comte de Bethune was daily expected in

Scotland, to take Cecile to France; "so not only (wrote the bereaved husband) have I lost *her*, who made the happiness of my life, but I am about to lose Cecile, whom I have so long considered as my daughter. I could have parted with her to you without a murmur; but, I confess, I like not to see her carried away, even by a father, to France, before that nuptial knot is tied, which is to unite for ever her destiny with England. If you dread not to come to the house of mourning, let us see you here, as the sooner you make acquaintance with the Comte de Bethune the better; and I am sure you will wish to bid farewell to Cecile before she leaves England.

"Man proposes, but God disposes, my dear young friend. When we parted a few weeks ago, how anxiously did we all look forward to our next meeting! and *she* whom I have lost, how did she picture a cheerful future, to be passed in constant interchange of visits, at our mutual houses. She has sought 'the narrow house,' and left me, in the winter of life, deprived of the sunshine her presence cast over my existence for so many happy years."

No sooner did Desbrow receive Lord Ayrshire's letter, than he determined to set off for Scotland without delay. A presentiment of impending evil, connected with Cecile's return to France, weighed on his spirits, which he sought in vain to conquer, and he felt dissatisfied with himself at not being able to vanquish this superstitious fancy. With what different feelings did he pursue his journey to Scotland, to those with which he left it a few weeks before. Death had been busy with those near and dear to him in that brief period; and though love still reigned in his heart, grief had sobered down his joyful anticipations, and reminded him of the fearful uncertainty of their realization—an uncertainty, which a few days before, he could not have brought himself to even apprehend. It was impossible to have lived in the same society with Lady Ayrshire, on the terms of cordial intimacy with which Desbrow had been received, without having formed for her a sincere friendship. His love for Cecile had grown beneath her eye, and had been fostered by her motherly encouragement; her benign presence was associated with all that he had yet known of purest happiness, and his regret for her loss was as deep as it was well founded.

CHAPTER IX.

"Dans la lutte établie entre l'amour et la vanité, il est rare que la victoire ne reste pas à celle-ci."

While Desbrow was pursuing his route to Ayrshire Abbey, his friend Arlington was yielding to the fascinations of the Lady Emily Vavasour, the fair daughter of his host, whose beauty had attracted him, and whose talents and amiability had fixed his hitherto volatile heart.

For some time he was unconscious that any stronger sentiment than a lively admiration, actuated his feelings towards her; for so decided had been his preference for Lady Walmer, and so frequently did the recollection of her obtrude itself on his mind, that he believed his passion for her was still unsubdued, till the anxiety which the marked attention of Lord Mordaunt to Lady Emily excited in his feelings, soon revealed to him the state of his heart, and he now turned his whole thoughts to the endeavour of securing an interest in her's. The Lady Emily Vavasour to great personal beauty united talents of no mean order, and a temper as remarkable for its sweetness, as were her manners for their polished elegance. Though an only child, and like all such, brought up in the lap of indulgence, by parents who idolized her, she was as totally unspoilt as if she had been the seventh daughter of a Scotch laird or an English curate. Fondly attached to her parents, she had reached her eighteenth year without having known an hour of sorrow, or a wish ungratified. Her mother, a woman of strong religious principles, had early instilled into the mind of her child, that only sure guide to peace—religion. It was the basis on which her conduct was founded and her hopes built; and its blessed effects were visible in the strict discharge of all her duties, and the peaceful tenour of her life.

The personal and mental superiority of Arlington over his would-be rival, soon won for him the preference of Lady Emily; and in a short time, he was received by her and her family, as her accepted suitor. He had now the enviable privilege of devoting nearly all his time and attention to his fair betrothed; and each day rendered them mutually more dear.

His father approved his choice, and offered the most liberal settlements, and all promised happiness for the future; when, one morning at the breakfast table, Lord Vavasour received a letter, announcing the visit of Lord and Lady Walmer, who wrote to say they were on their route to the Duke of D——'s, and would stay a day or two at Vavasour Hall.

Nothing could be more unwelcome to Arlington than this rencontre. His first impulse was to leave the house under some pretence or other, and so avoid a meeting with Lady Walmer; but as she was to arrive that day, and that he had received no letters, he could have made no excuse for going away so suddenly, that would not have had an extraordinary appearance. So sincere was his attachment to Lady Emily, that it had wholly triumphed over his former passion for Lady Walmer, and it was only from a wish of not giving the latter pain, that he desired to shun an interview which he now felt could no longer have any danger for him. He determined to treat her with marked respect, but to avoid all chances of explanation, or confidential intercourse: a resolution which he concluded it would be almost unnecessary to form, as Lady Walmer would naturally conduct herself towards him with all that cold politeness, which their relative positions required. Still he anticipated the meeting with no pleasurable feelings:—there is always a *gaucherie* in encountering a person once loved, and to whom the strongest professions of attachment have been made, when that love is transferred to another object. A sense of shame at one's own inconstancy, embarrasses the person *vis-à-vis* to a former flame, and this sentiment will aways be felt in proportion to the inconstant's natural kindness of heart.

"It is strange," said Lady Emily, "that often as Lord and Lady Walmer have been invited here, they never have paid us a visit before, and now come unasked. We are surely more than twenty miles out of the route to the Duke of D———'s, which makes their visit more extraordinary."

"I never before heard you, my dear Emily, make so inhospitable a reflection," said Lord Vavasour, "and we are but the more obliged to the Walmers for coming twenty miles out of their way, to give us their company for a day or two."

Lady Emily looked as if she could have well dispensed with the obligation, though had she been asked why, she could hardly have given a reason. The truth was, she felt so happy, that she wished for no change in the circle around her, and least of all, the addition to it of persons with whom she was but slightly acquainted.

During the morning, Arlington felt unsettled and unhinged; the society of Lady Emily seemed for the first time to fail in occupying his thoughts, which, in spite of him, recurred continually to the expected guest.

How would she receive him? and what would be her opinion at discovering, which she could not fail to do, that the passionate love, professed for herself some ten weeks before, was now transferred to another? And she too, compelled to be a witness to his inconstancy! How unfortunate that she should come! But then, perhaps, Lady Walmer had as completely conquered her predilection for him, as he had his for her. In that case, indeed, all would be well, and friendship and goodwill might take the place of warmer feelings. But no! and here vanity, that self-flatterer, whispered, that her's was not a passion to be so soon cured;—and a pang of self-reproach shot through the generous feelings of Arlington as he contemplated her possible chagrin, that almost atoned for the egotism which led him to believe in the continuance of her attachment,—a supposed fidelity, which had he analyzed his sentiments, he would have attributed more to the belief of his own merits, than to her stability.

More than once, during the day, Lady Emily, observing his abstraction, rallied him on it, and it required a considerable effort to force himself to reply to her *plaisanteries*.

Lord and Lady Walmer arrived at the hour usually chosen by people of tact to make their appearance in a country house, —namely, that devoted to dressing for dinner; when an arrival breaks in on no one's occupations, and the first interview with the persons composing the society, is in the drawing-room or library, just in time to permit the greetings of reception, before the maître d'hotel announces that dinner is served. People then appear in fresh garments and fresh looks, take their places naturally, and give just enough excitement, by the *mille petits riens et on dits*, that new comers have to communicate, to render their presence not merely an addition, but an acquisition to enliven the monotony of a country-house. Not so arrive the unsophisticated persons, unblessed with tact, whom some luckless host is compelled to invite to his chateau. A fear of being too late for Lord Rochfort, who is so punctual, induces them to start on their journey three hours too soon, and they drive up to the door flushed and heated, with uncurled locks and dresses *chiffonnés*, just as the hostess and her guests are about to ascend the carriage for their late morning drive.

The *dame du château* must give up her drive, to remain and

act the civil, heartily wishing the new comers twenty miles off; —it is too early for them to dress for dinner, and too late to make a change in their tumbled toilettes.

They hope they do not interrupt Lady Rochefort's drive, and entreat her not to stand on ceremony with them, half an hour after the carriages have driven away; and the poor hostess having offered them refreshments, abandons herself to the interminable and inane remarks of the lady guests, while the husband looks out of the window, and wonders when Lord Rochfort will return from shooting, reminding his wife every half hour, how unnecessary her haste had been, and showing how heavy the pressure of time hangs on his hands, by beating a tattoo on the window frame and tables by the way of beguiling it. They are too tired to walk, but not sufficiently so to retire to their chambers to refresh and repose themselves, as their considerate hostess has more than once proposed; and she is only relieved from her thraldom by the ringing of the first dinner bell, when, half dead with ennui, and already heartily tired of her new guests, she seeks the privacy of her dressing-room, and vents in yawns, suppressed during the two last tedious hours, her *découragement moral*.

Other visitors of the same class, sin in a different way. Afraid to arrive too soon, and be in Lady Rochfort's way, they set out an hour too late; the second dinner-bell has rung as they drive to the door, but in rushing to their apartments, they beg the groom of the chambers to assure my lady that they will be ready in fifteen minutes. The message is delivered, not *sotto voce*, and excites the dismay of all the assembled company, who know what fifteen minutes mean, when imperials, chaise seats, and bonnet boxes have to be taken *down* from the carriage, and *up* to the dressing-rooms, unpacked and huddled on by the cold fingers of a half-frozen lady's maid, nearly dislocated from the motion of the dickey-box or rumble-tumble, and who has forgotten where half the finery most wanted has been stowed away.

Some of the guests are in horror at the anticipation of the spoiled dinner; and others, more fastidious, are shocked at the notion of fifteen minutes' toilette, after a dusty or dirty road, and being shut up so many hours, when the necessary ablutions alone would require more than that brief period; but all are discomposed, and put out of humour. The pendule, on the chimney, is often anxiously regarded; and when thrice fifteen minutes have elapsed, the luckless visitors enter the library, with heightened colour, which has divided itself, with impar-

tiality, between their noses and cheeks, " making the white one red," and draperies and garnitures as ruffled as their tempers. But here end not the miseries; for, in breathless haste, Madame Mère pours forth an endless volley of apologies, excuses, and demands for pardon. " She is so shocked,—so sorry,—but the roads were so bad, the post-horses so tired, and they had no idea it was so late." Another quarter of an hour is thus filled up, until the overpowered hostess, and hungry guests, their last remnant of patience exhausted, are summoned to the *salle-à-manger*, where, overdone venison, and tepid or *rè-chauffées entrées*, keep alive the resentments of the gourmands, and the displeasure of the lord and lady of the banquet, to the tactless causes of their spoiled dinner.

Never did Lady Walmer look more lovely, than when Arlington's eyes fell on her as he entered the library, and the bright colour which tinged her cheek, while he offered his compliments to her, added to her loveliness, as well as to the interest it excited for her in his breast. When her hand touched his, he thought its movement tremulous; though the truth was, the tremulousness was in *his* hand, and not in *her's*. But she was more accurate in her judgment of this point; and from it, deduced that her power over him was not yet destroyed. This belief lent a greater softness to her manner; and, when their eyes met, the long and pensive look, which seemed as if it would reach his inmost soul, and expressed all the affection of her's, made him tremble while he turned from his unequivocal tenderness, to seek the mild and less practised glances of his Emily.

At dinner, he was placed *vis-à-vis* to Lady Walmer, whose varying colour, and agitated looks, whenever he addressed Lady Emily, by whom he was seated, betrayed the pain she felt; and the consciousness of this imposed a degree of reserve on Arlington, that rendered his position peculiarly awkward. He had now the conviction that he was still beloved by Lady Walmer; and though good feeling, as well as good sense, prompted the wish that it had not been so, still vanity, that inseparable companion of the human breast, made him feel a complacency at the conviction, and a warm gratitude towards the object that administered to his self-love. Had Lady Walmer treated him with haughtiness, or indifference, he could better have brooked her presence; but now, could he be so barbarous, so unfeeling, as to wound the heart of a woman who loved him, by attentions to another, which proved the transfer of his affection? No! the restraint could only last

two days; she would then depart, and probably the unsophisticated Emily, in that short period, would not be aware of the decrease of his attentions.

So reasoned Arlington, during the time of dinner; and though he would have willingly risked wounding Lady Walmer's feelings, in preference to offending Emily, he had not courage to pay the latter any of the countless and nameless acts of *prevenance*, which she had been for weeks accustomed to receive from him. Every time he turned his eyes to the opposite side of the table, and, truth to say, that was continually, he found those of Lady Walmer fixed on him. Emily being by his side, he could not, without a movement of his head, which would have excited anew the agitation and distress of Lady Walmer, observe the sweet countenance of his affianced wife, or the changes produced in it by his unwonted abstraction and coldness. Had he looked on it, he would have been recalled to a sense of his weakness; but, as it was, he yielded to a false sentiment of pity, springing more from his own vanity, than any other source. When the ladies rose from table, instead of seeking the eyes of Emily, he found himself reading in those of her rival, her thanks for his forbearance: but turning from their too eloquent expression, to catch the retreating figure of Emily, whose languid movements and dejected air spoke reproaches to his heart, he ardently pined for an opportunity of again devoting all his attentions to her, free from the jealous observation of Lady Walmer.

CHAPTER X.

"Half the errors attributed to love have their source only in vanity; and many a woman has made sacrifices to this unworthy passion, who might have successfully resisted the pleadings of affection."

Lady Walmer had perception enough to be aware that her only chance of retaining her influence over Arlington, was to affect a violent passion for him. Bent on this purpose, she became blind to the risks to which the fulfilment of it would inevitably expose her. And here was a proof that vanity sometimes triumphs over pride in woman's heart, as well as in man's. Her preference for Arlington, though the strongest, and

perhaps the only permanent one she had ever known, would not have injured her peace of mind, had her vanity not been wounded by his having had the power to fly from her, even at the moment when she acknowledged that he was dear to her. Had he fled in despair at her coldness, she could have borne it; but as it was, it was too mortifying, and she determined, *coûte qui coûte*, to win him back, if only to prove to him, that when again at her feet she could banish him for ever.

Day after day, during the first month of his absence, she expected a letter, breathing repentance for his flight, and intreating to be again restored to her favour; but when week after week passed without a line from him, her indignation knew no bounds. Lady Walmer was incapable of appreciating the character or conduct of Arlington, and consequently misjudged both so completely, as to attribute his flight to a want of affection, derogatory to the power of her fascination; instead of viewing it as a proof of his triumph over himself, in sacrificing his feelings to her peace.

Some remarks made by Lord Walmer on the sudden departure of Arlington, goaded the irritable vanity of his wife; who having been proud of displaying her conquest, was humiliated that even her husband should think her adorers could thus easily throw off her chains.

Such was the state of her feelings when intelligence reached London, that Arlington was on the eve of marriage with Lady Emily Vavasour. To paint her anger, would be impossible; rage, jealousy, and a sense of humiliation filled her breast, and being compelled to conceal her emotions, they preyed but the more deeply on her ill-governed mind. The envious belles, who had disputed with her the conquest of Arlington, now flocked round to comment on his approaching marriage, to repeat a thousand exaggerated tales of his long and devoted passion for Lady Emily; the immense settlements he had offered, and the splendid diamonds he had commanded. His attachment was represented as something quite worthy of the days of romance; and Lady Emily was pronounced by these soi-disant friends of Lady Walmer, a most fortunate woman, to have gained the heart of such a man, especially when it was taken into consideration how many women had sought it, by encouraging his attentions. None of this malice lost its effect on her whom it was meant to wound; she felt—poignantly felt it—until it rankled in her very soul, exciting her to sacrifice pride, delicacy, and every feminine feeling of propriety, to the accomplishment of the only scheme that promised a salve to her

wounded vanity,—that, of again securing Arlington's affections, and showing the envious women who taunted her, how easily she could make him resume her chains.

But while revolving this plan, she was not forgetful that the eyes of all her clique were upon her; and this weak woman, who was incapable of conquering the feelings of wounded vanity, concealed with a Spartan firmness, worthy of a good cause, the anguish it inflicted. Nay, she affected to be pleased at the marriage; said she had long known of the attachment, for that Lord Arlington had made her his confidant; an assertion that excited an exchange of sundry malicious glances between the ladies composing her audience, none of which escaped her observation, though she pretended not to remark them. She dwelt with exaggeration on the qualities, mental and personal, of Lady Emily, with whom she was but slightly acquainted, and proclaimed that two such amiable and accomplished persons could not fail to be happy.

This ruse imposed on no one, save Lord Walmer, on whom it took entire effect; and he felt much gratified, as the confession of his wife's having been Arlington's confidant, seemed now to explain, most satisfactorily to him, all the causes of their former long interviews and habits of intimacy, which had often excited his surprise, if not his jealousy.

But all was now explained; and feeling more cordially disposed towards his wife than he had been for a long time, he yielded a ready assent to her proposal of accepting an invitation to the Duke of D——, which he had previously nearly determined on declining.

Lady Walmer had felt as little inclination as her lord, to go to the duke's, until she recollected that Lord Vavasour's seat was only twenty miles out of the route, which would furnish her with an excuse for accepting an invitation often given, of staying a few days there. She frankly proposed this visit to her lord, who readily agreed to it, but she determined on not announcing her intention to Lord Vavasour, until she was on the eve of making it, lest Arlington might take flight; as she guessed he could feel no wish of encountering her under present circumstances.

To win back her recreant knight, and to exhibit him to her clique, was now the end and aim of all this weak woman's plans; and she never paused to ask herself if, in pursuing her schemes, the happiness of the young and amiable Lady Emily, as well as that of Arlington, might not be sacrificed. No! She thought not of them; self, and self only, was consulted,

and, for the gratification of her vanity, she was ready to immolate all that opposed its triumph.

Lady Walmer was not naturally a bad hearted or wicked person, and if, a few months before, any one could have foretold her, that she would act as she was now doing, she would have despised the prediction and felt insulted by the prophet; but vanity, her ruling passion, she had never even endeavoured to control, and so long had she yielded to its empire, that it now wholly governed her. Instigated by this mean and unworthy passion, which has led more women to ruin than all others beside, she now fearlessly obeyed its dictates; and determined to leave nothing undone to recover her empire over Arlington, who, unconscious of her real character, attributed that to affection which proceeded from vanity alone; and his own self-love being flattered by it, he pitied what, had he known her real sentiments, he would have despised.

Into how many snares does not vanity lead us, and how often, for the indulgence of that evil passion in ourselves, do we administer to that of others! Had he not been blinded by his own fatuity, he would have seen that Lady Walmer's present conduct was as inconsistent with true affection as it was with female delicacy; and he would have at once discouraged her impropriety of conduct, by continuing his attentions to her innocent and amiable rival. But men are as prone to believe in the force and durability of the passions they inspire, as are weak women; and hence, are oftener the victims of their vanity than of their affections.

When the gentlemen joined the ladies in the drawing-room, Arlington found that Lady Walmer had established a *tête-à-tête* on a sofa, with Lady Emily; leaving Lady Vavasour and the wife of the rector, who had joined the party, to amuse themselves in a similar manner. This manœuvre precluded the possibility of Arlington's having an opportunity of saying a word in private to Lady Emily, and had been calculated upon, and arranged accordingly, by the wily Lady Walmer.

Nothing could be so disadvantageous to Emily, as the contrast she now afforded to her rival, who, elated with the success of her glances at dinner, was blooming and brilliant in beauty, while Emily's cheek wore a paler hue, and her eyes looked languid and heavy, as their downcast lids tried to veil them from the searching gaze of Lady Walmer, who seemed as if she would have read her inmost thoughts. We must, in justice to Arlington, add, that the pallid cheek and heavy eyes of Emily,

though thus brought into forcible and disadvantageous contrast with the blooming tint and sparkling eyes of Lady Walmer, never had more attraction for him than at this moment, when they disclosed how deep must be the sentiment of attachment for himself, which could so soon subdue her natural vivacity, and shade the brilliant character of her beauty. Lady Walmer was too quick-sighted not to observe the deep interest which the pensive looks of Emily had awakened, and too clever not to try and divert the attention of her lover to some other point; she, therefore, proposed music, and asked Emily to sing, though one glance at her countenance must have betrayed that such an exertion at the present moment would be impossible. A head-ache, that never failing apology for a heart-ache, was offered as an excuse for Emily's refusal; and Lady Walmer proposed to accompany herself on the piano, that Lady Emily might hear one or two new songs, of which she spoke in high terms. Arlington now hoped that while Lady Walmer was singing, he might have an opportunity of saying a few words in private to Emily, and, therefore, expressed a desire to hear the song or songs to which she alluded; but no sooner did she rise to go to the piano, than she took the arm of Emily, and, at the same moment, called to Arlington to place the music-stool for her.

This behest performed, while she was playing the symphony, he turned to Emily, and with a look, in which the whole tenderness of his heart was displayed, in a low voice, hoped she was not very ill, and that her head-ache would soon subside. The look and manner that accompanied these words, carried a balm to the feelings of her to whom they were addressed; and she thanked him with one of her sweetest smiles, while replying that she was sure a night's sleep would perfectly restore her to her accustomed health.

Softly as the few words which passed between the lovers had been spoken, they reached the listening ears of Lady Walmer, and excited a jealous rage in her breast, whose intensity surprised her. Admirably, however, suppressing all exhibition of it, she playfully requested Arlington to lead Lady Emily in front of her, adding, that she was foolishly nervous, and never could sing if people were behind her.

When they had complied with her request, and that both were so placed that every glance of her's could command them, she commenced the following song, fixing her eyes on Arlington's face, with an expression of deep melancholy, that well

accorded with the plaintive sound of her low-toned and melodious voice, every intonation of which struck reproaches to the mind of Arlington, as she seemed to address him.

" Yes ! I have loved thee but too well,
My very soul was giv'n to thee;
But thou'st dissolved the magic spell,
And set my captive fond heart free.

But, as some hapless bird confined,
With pinions long unused to soar,
In liberty no charms would find,
Nor pine to mount in air once more,

So feel I, for this heart was thine,
So long thou didst its feelings sway;
Its bitterness alone is mine,
For thou hast stol'n its peace away."

To describe the effect of this song upon Arlington, every line of which was aided by all the expression that the touching voice and beautiful countenance of the singer could give it, would be impossible. He felt as if every eye and ear in the room must detect in it, all that Lady Walmer meant him alone to comprehend. Nor was he reassured when, stealing a look at Emily, he saw astonishment and pain depicted on every lineament of her intelligent face.

When the song ended, and before Lady Walmer could receive the compliments of the few of her auditors who felt disposed to pay her any, Lady Vavasour left her seat, and approaching her daughter, drew her arm within her's, and gently led her from the room. Arlington would have given worlds to have followed them, and to have helped to support the tottering steps of his beloved Emily; but he felt that were he to do so, Lady Walmer was capable of making some scene, which would only serve to compromise herself and him, and, therefore, remained in the salon.

Lord Vavasour happily relieved him from a *tête-à-tête* with Lady Walmer, which she had evidently resolved to effect; and that good-natured, but somewhat obtuse man, having complimented her on her voice, lamented the indisposition of his daughter, which, he said, he could in no way account for; as, in general, she was the most healthy, as well as the most cheerful person, in the world; " but," continued the fond father, " all you ladies, on certain occasions, are apt to be agitated,"—here both his listeners looked alarmed,—" and the period fixed for the marriage of Emily and my friend,"— laying his hand affectionately on the shoulder of Arlington,—" now draws so

near, that one must not wonder if my poor Emily, in the midst of all her happiness, sometimes feels a few pangs at the thoughts of leaving her doting parents. You will forgive this, won't you, my dear Arlington? for, be assured, she who feels the most regret at leaving her father's home, will be the most likely to make that of her husband a scene of happiness."

Lady Walmer writhed under the emotions this speech was so well calculated to call forth; and was incapable of any other reply than a bow of assent; while Arlington studiously avoided her glance, feeling unable to support the reproaches he was convinced it would convey.

When Lady Vavasour returned to the salon, her manner towards Lady Walmer was so coldly reserved, that even Arlington, pre-occupied as he was, could not help being struck with it, and pitied the embarrassment it evidently caused that lady. He approached Lady Vavasour, and expressed his hope that she left Lady Emily better; but a stern look, and freezing reply, that she was doing well, discouraged him from any further conversation.

The rest of the evening passed away as dully as all evenings do, between people who have few ideas in common, and when no one in the circle has the power or the inclination, *pour faire des frais*, for amusing the rest.

CHAPTER XI.

"Les femmes abandonnées par l'amour, dévotes par nécessité, méchantes par tempérament, et médisantes par envie."

Mrs. Preston, the rector's wife, or lady, as she loved to be called, who had been engaged in private conversation with Lady Vavasour during the evening, had not been an unmindful or unprejudiced spectatress of the conduct of Lady Walmer during dinner, and the *soirée* that followed it. She was one of those observant, and loquacious ladies, of which almost every country town offer an example, who are much prone to examine the actions and words of those with whom they come in contact, and to communicate the results of their examinations, with all their comments thereupon. An extreme activity of mind,

never turned to any laudable pursuit, left Mrs. Preston ample time and resources for making herself *au fait* of all the private histories of every family of her acquaintance; and her visits were received by the ladies of her neighbourhood, who happened to have gossiping propensities, with the same satisfaction with which a certain Sunday newspaper is opened by many of its readers, who are dying to see what is said of their intimate friends and acquaintances.

Mrs. Preston had passed her years of maidenhood as *dame de compagnie*, with the Dowager Marchioness of Chatterwell, where her quick perception of character enabled her to fill the role of critic to the guests, and admirer to the hostess and her daughter, to the full satisfaction of the two latter. By a peculiarity of optics, she saw nothing but defects in the visitors, and naught but perfections in her protectresses; and when the clerical preceptor of the *marquis* (the only son of his doting mother), was to be presented with the lucrative living of Chatterwell, as a reward for his services, the hand of the precise Miss Dunstan was the only stipulation to the gift proposed by the marchioness, to the luckless prelate.

The Lady Elizabeth was on the point of marriage; the *dame de compagnie* was to be got rid of handsomely; the preceptor was to be provided for, and the two last points in the programma of the marchioness' plans were to be accomplished by making the living of the parson provide a living for the toady.

They equally disliked each other, but what was to be done? —nothing but to marry, and continue their mutual dislike under the small roof of the rectory, as they had done under the aristocratic one of Chatterwell during so many years.

The Lady Elizabeth was now Countess of Elesmere, a woman of fashion, and would-be beauty, who had disputed the conquest of Arlington's heart with Lady Walmer, and who had never forgiven his preference of the latter. His subsequent departure from London, and the news of his approaching marriage, had gratified her, in the belief that both were highly mortifying to her rival. She it was who had taunted Lady Walmer, by repeating every particular she could learn or invent, relative to the intended marriage; and, recollecting that her *ci-devant* toady was now a near neighbour of the Vavasours, she wrote to acquire all the information she could from her Argus, in return communicating the former supposed liaison of Arlington and Lady Walmer, with a prohibition not to mention it to Lady Vavasour, which she knew would have pre-

cisely the contrary effect, as the mischief-loving propensities of Mrs. Preston were well known to her.

"I hope," (wrote Lady Elesmere), "that Lord Arlington has entirely conquered his passion for my coquettish friend; but such is her power over him, that I should tremble, were I Lady Emily, to let him come again within reach of this syren."

Lady Elesmere dispatched this letter the day she had discovered the intention of the Walmers to stay a few days at Vavasour Castle, on their way to the Duke of D——'s, an intention which her lord heard Lord Walmer communicate to some of his clique at White's, and which Lord Elesmere repeated to his wife. She felt sure, that not only would Lady Walmer find a severe observer in Mrs. Preston, but that all she knew, guessed, or feared, would, under the seal of secresy, be disclosed to Lady Vavasour; who being a woman more remarkable for severity of morals than perception of character, or clearness of intellect, was precisely the person most likely to be influenced by such a disclosure, and to make a use of it little calculated to administer to the happiness of the persons most concerned.

All had occurred as the artful Lady Elesmere had foreseen and wished. Furnished with the clue sent in her letter, Mrs. Preston interpreted every glance and movement of Lady Walmer and Arlington into a proof of past guilt and present attachment. "Her dear, sweet, innocent Lady Emily was a victim about to be offered up, and she ought, she would, save her."

No sooner had she found herself *tête-à-tête*, in a corner with Lady Vavasour, than she began to animadvert on Lady Walmer, until, by degrees, she had made her hostess acquainted with all she had heard, suspected, or imagined; so that when the song was given, accompanied by the tender glances and impassioned manner that marked its performance, it seemed, to the prejudiced feelings of Lady Vavasour, a convincing proof of the truth of all that she had been hearing for the last two hours.

Observing the effect the song produced on her daughter, she rose, as already related, and led her from the room; and it required no little self-command on her part to resist expressing her sentiments to Emily; who sought her pillow with that overpowering, though vague, sense of unhappiness, which oppresses the young and sensitive heart, when it first yields to doubt or suspicion, and admits these insidious passions into the

sanctuary where love and confidence had before only been known.

The impassioned glances of Lady Walmer, fixed with such intensity on Arlington, her affianced husband, haunted her imagination; the words of the song, so boldly, so unfemininely, addressed to him, seemed still to sound in her ears; and his evident constraint ever since Lady Walmer's arrival, announced even to her unsophisticated mind some understanding between them, inimical to her peace. Then came the recollection of the visible perturbation of her mother, and the offended air with which she led her from the salon. All this must have some cause, and her parent must have seen much to disapprove ere she would have been so evidently ruffled. And here, tears, the first that love had ever brought into her eyes, flowed in abundance.

Fondly and entirely had she allowed herself to love Arlington; and her parents had unreservedly sanctioned the attachment, which a few weeks would have seen ratified at the altar,—but now—and her tears streamed afresh—it was but too evident, another had claims on his heart, and that other, a married woman.

The high sense of moral rectitude of Emily was as much wounded as her affection; she had never mixed in any society, but of those whose conduct was irreproachable; had never been initiated into the scandalous histories, which, whether true or false, equally tend to sully the mind accustomed to hear them; hence the shock of seeing her betrothed husband claimed as a lover, by a married woman, inflicted a deep wound on her peace.

She had so often heard Arlington express his abhorrence of vice, and had so frequently found his moral and religious sentiments accordant with her own, that she now shrank from the idea of contemplating him in such a new, such a different point of view; and she passed the first sleepless hours of her life, in weeping over her delusion. And yet, in the midst of bitter thoughts, came the consoling one, that he had not returned the passionate glances of Lady Walmer. No! Emily had observed, with woman's instinctive quickness, that he seemed to shrink from, rather than return them; and this recollection was soothing. Yes, he must love her; he could not forget all the vows they had exchanged, all the plans for the future they had arranged together. He was too happy before Lady Walmer came, to admit of Emily's doubting that his thoughts reverted

to any one but her; and with this consolatory thought, she closed her weary and tearful eyes in slumber.

To a deep sensibility, Emily Vavasour united the rare accompaniment of a most sweet and equal temper; and, though possessed of a degree of feminine softness, which might lead superficial observers to conclude that she was deficient in firmness, she was yet by no means wanting in that essential quality; a quality as different from its mean substitute, obstinacy, as rashness is from true courage, prudery from virtue, and bigotry from religion.

She felt, even while her heart was agonized at the thought, that she could separate herself for ever from Arlington, were she convinced that he was unworthy her affection; but she prayed that this conviction might never be forced on her.

First love, in an elevated mind, is pure as the first breath of the morning zephyr, and beautiful as Hope, ere it has learnt to doubt.

Emily's purity and confidence chased away the doubts that had clouded her mind, as the sun dispels the vapours that would obscure its brilliancy, and she slept the slumber of innocence; that light and peaceful sleep, which never descends on the lids of guilt, and rarely visits those on whom passion has left its burning trace.

Visions of happiness were present to her imagination; Arlington led her through verdant meads, where a thousand fragrant flowers courted her touch; and his voice, uttering vows of love, came to her ear, mingled with the joy-inspiring notes of innumerable birds. Her father smiled on her, and her mother blessed her. Thus, the pure imagination of this young and charming girl presented to her, even in sleep, the images most dear and attractive to her innocent mind.

Lady Vavasour no sooner found herself alone with her lord, which happened not ere they had sought their pillows, than the nuptial couch was made, as it too frequently is, the bed of thorns, by being chosen as the scene of domestic jars, unpleasant disclosures, and painful consultations; hence the alarm entertained by so many bachelors, who renounce the smiles of the saffron-robed god from the bare apprehension of "curtain lectures."

All that Mrs. Preston had stated, relative to Arlington's former passion for Lady Walmer, was now repeated to Lord Vavasour, with the high colouring given by a prudish woman and an affectionate mother, alarmed for the happiness of her only child.

Lord Vavasour had lived much in the gay world in his youth, and had learned to look on certain *liaisons* in it, with a charity, little in accordance with the severity of his wife's principles; so that a difference of opinion often arose between them, which the laxity of his notions, and the over-prudishness of her's, rendered as dangerous to harmony, as it was unavailing to carry conviction to the mind of either. The first pause which the volubility of Lady Vavasour allowed, was filled up by her lord bursting into a laugh, and exclaiming,

"Stuff!—nonsense! my dear; how can you listen to such gossip? How like that interfering busybody, Mrs. Preston, to come here and fill your ears with tales of forgotten scandal! Do you suppose that Arlington, a fine, handsome, young man, mingling in certain cliques, where attachments are, if not openly acknowledged, at least tacitly tolerated, has been living like a saint?"

"Really Lord Vavasour, it is quite dreadful to hear you talk —you, a husband and a father, making light of conduct the most reprehensible and wicked."

"Well, well, after all, my dear, recollect that when you married me, I did not pass for a saint; nay, I verily believe I was considered one of the greatest sinners about town; and yet, I do not think I have made a bad husband."

This appeal touched a tender chord in the feelings of Lady Vavasour; and candour and affection both led her to admit, that, if her husband's theory sometimes tempted him to "make the worse appear the better cause," in practice, his conduct had been irreproachable; and this opportune recollection somewhat softened the severity of her strictures on the supposed guilt of Arlington.

Her more pacific tone produced a corresponding effect on her lord; and he begged her not to hint a word of what she had heard to Emily, while he promised to keep an observant eye on the conduct of their intended son-in-law.

"If it be true," said Lord Vavasour, "that Arlington has had an attachment to Lady Walmer, and, as is supposed, that it was reciprocal, there is no reason to imagine that, if it still continued, he would seek the hand of our daughter; and to make him now suffer for past folly, would be unreasonable."

"There now, my dear, interrupted Lady Vavasour, "you do so provoke me by calling guilt,—serious, dreadful guilt,—folly. Have we not cause to tremble for the future happiness of our good, our innocent child, if we commit it to the keep-

ing of a man who has indulged a passion for a married woman?"

"But this attachment may, and, we ought to hope, has been unattended with guilt," replied Lord Vavasour; "Arlington may have seen his danger in time, and avoided it; look at the fair side of the picture, my dear, and let us believe that, in half the liaisons to which guilt is attributed, *the appearance* only exists."

Lord Vavasour tried to think as he spoke; but now, that all Mrs. Preston's tales were supported by the evidence of his wife's personal observation, and, indeed, by his own late-awakened consciousness of something strange and embarrassed in Arlington, as well as something indescribable in Lady Walmer's manner, he felt a suspicion that all was not right, though he would not admit his apprehension to his wife. He determined to observe them narrowly, and, perhaps for the first time in his life, fell asleep with the painful sensation of mistrusting a person he had been accustomed to esteem.

It rarely happens that even the most innocent can escape, when their actions are viewed through the medium of suspicion, which, like jealousy, gives its own colouring to every object on which it reflects. In such cases, persons imagine they are only examining, when they have already condemned, because they go to the trial with excited susceptibilities, predisposed to find the suspected guilty.

CHAPTER XII.

"C'est le propre des passions d'altérer le jugement, et de nous faire perdre ce sens droit qui nous montre les choses sous leur véritable aspect."

When the party met at breakfast the next morning, the marked coldness of Lady Vavasour's manner towards Lady Walmer, and the embarrassment that coldness evidently occasioned to her who was the object of it, enlisted all the sympathy of Arlington on her side. She was now an object of pity to him—a dangerous position for the pityer, at least, if not for the pitied,—and conscious that she had placed herself in her present humiliating situation, through a misplaced affec-

tion for him (though he would willingly, gladly have dispensed with it), still he felt himself bound to bestow more attention on her, now that there was a visible diminution of it on the part of her host and hostess.

The constrained politeness of the Vavasours, so different to the *empressement* which she had been accustomed to see evinced towards her, piqued the pride of Lady Walmer, and a desire of avenging herself on them was soon added to her selfish wish of winning Arlington again into her chains :—to such lengths can vanity and egotism push their heartless votaries, who begin by being only weak, and end by being wicked.

Emily entered the breakfast-room, with renewed hopes of happiness, and restored confidence in her lover. A refreshing slumber had brought back the roses to her cheek, and animation to her countenance; a bright sunshine illuminated every object that met her gaze, and its exhilarating effects made themselves even more evident on her youthful frame and elastic spirits, than on the trees and herbage on which it shone, imparting to each a thousand brilliant hues.

She smiled at her foreboding fears of the evening before; and was angry with herself for having yielded to them for a moment; it was an injustice to Arlington for which she longed to make him amends; and, after all, what had she observed, at which she had a right to be dissatisfied? Nothing. Lady Walmer, it is true, kept her eyes fixed on Arlington all the evening; and her manner of appearing to address her song exclusively to him, was peculiar, and had wounded her; but it might be only her general manner; she was perhaps one of those coquettish persons of whom Emily had read, more than observed, and Arlington being the only young man present, she had played off her propensities on him. It could be nothing else! and again she blamed herself for having been made unhappy.

All this passed through the pure mind of the lovely and amiable girl, as she performed the duties of her simple, but elegant, *toilette de matin* to which she gave even more than her accustomed attention; determined, with a woman's latent feeling of vanity, to wear her best looks, as an *amende* to her lover, for having worn her worst the previous evening.

The pale cheek and languid eye of Emily, had often been present to Arlington's imagination during the night: he loved her more fondly than ever, for those proofs of her affection, and reproached himself bitterly for having called them forth. He entered the breakfast-room, determined to resume all his

wonted attention to her, and little disposed to bestow any portion of it on Lady Walmer; when the ill-judged display of coldness, almost amounting to incivility, of the host and hostess to her, and their constrained manner towards himself, completely changed the current of his feelings, and piqued him into a display of attention towards her, that would, otherwise, have never been paid.

Lord Walmer, who appeared totally unconscious of all that was passing around him, having happened to look at his wife, observed aloud, that he had never seen her look so pale: and with his habitual good-nature, hoped she was not ill. This drew from the lady an avowal, that she had not closed her eyes during the night; and a stolen glance at Arlington,—which was duly noted by Lord and Lady Vavasour,—implied that he was the cause; which so vexed them, that they could not force themselves to utter the usual regrets, or expressions of interest, always used on such occasions;—an omission which excited the displeasure of Arlington, and induced him to redouble his civilities.

Lady Walmer having remarked the night before, how much the paleness and *air abattu* of Emily had increased the interest of her lover for her, determined to emulate these indications of sensibility. With her it was easily done; she had only to leave off the rouge, which daily lent her cheek its bright tint, and assume a languid air, and the metamorphosis was complete. It might have been lost on Arlington, who was determined not to look at her, had not the observation of Lord Walmer drawn his eyes to her face, and her unusual paleness struck him with pity, little judging its cause.

It was at this moment that Emily entered, glowing with health and beauty, animation sparkling in her liquid eye, and playing on her rich lips, which parted with smiles as she replied to the various inquiries of interest and affection, that met her at every side.

"I am quite well, thank you; never slept better; and awoke as if I had never had a head-ache:" were the answers to all; and a sweet smile, and cordial shake-hands to Arlington, set his mind at rest as to *his* having wounded her peace the night before.

Perhaps there was a lingering feeling of vanity in the sentiment of disappointment, with which he heard her avowal of perfect health, and marked her appearance of gaiety. Then, after all, she did not love him as well as he had fancied, and the indisposition of the night before had nothing to do with him.

No! it was the unfortunate Lady Walmer, who was to be pitied, and who was placed in her present painful humiliating position, through her uncontrollable affection for him.

All these thoughts rushed through his mind, and the result was, that he showed much more attention to the unworthy coquette, than his engagement with Emily ought to have allowed; and the dear innocent girl, determining to atone for her suspicions of the previous evening, made an effort to maintain her cheerfulness during the repast, and succeeded so well, that she never appeared more beautiful or more brilliant in the eyes of all around her.

Lord Walmer announced his intention, after breakfast, of leaving Vavasour Castle the next morning, and the faint opposition to the measure expressed by its owners, struck even him, as being most inhospitable, though his obtuseness generally prevented his remarking many things which must have been observed by others.

Much as Arlington wished them gone,—and he sincerely desired it,—yet he was shocked at what he considered the rudeness of Lord and Lady Vavasour, and he felt increased pity for Lady Walmer, at the *gaucherie* of her position.

A drive to view some picturesque site in the neighbourhood, kept the ladies together, under mutual constraint, until the first dinner-bell sent them to their dressing-rooms; and a dull dinner, unenlivened by a single effort at gaiety, except on the part of Emily, who vainly tried to dissipate the general gloom, was followed by as dull an evening; for each, and all, felt under a restraint.

Lady Vavasour sent Emily to her dressing-room for her salts, to relieve a head-ache; and Arlington eagerly seized an opportunity of quitting the room a moment after. He met Lady Emily descending the stairs, and the mutual restraint both had undergone for the last two days, made them feel this meeting with double pleasure. Arlington drew her arm within his, and pressing her hand to his heart and then to his lips, repeated those vows of affection, which were so gratifying to the artless girl.

"Dear, dear Emily," said he, "how long have the two last days appeared to me, and how blissful is it to meet you again alone, even for a few minutes."

"I too have thought them long," replied Emily, as, with a look beaming with confidence and affection, she fixed her mild eyes on his.

"Bless you, dearest! for the avowal," said Arlington; and again

and again the little white hand that rested within his, was pressed to his lips. "Tell me, my own Emily, that you, like me, look forward with delight to the happy future, when, united in the indissoluble bonds of marriage, we shall never be separated?"

"Yes, dearest Charles," said the blushing girl, "all my wishes,—all my hopes,—are centered in the happy prospect of being your wife; and except that I must leave my father and mother;"—and here a tear trembled in her eye,—"I should be too happy. But let us go to my mother; see,"—holding up the flacon of salts,—"how you've made me forget her already."

Again was her hand pressed to the lips of her lover, as she tried gently to disengage it; and never did he feel so passionately and devotedly attached to her as at this moment, when hope whispered, "In a few days, this charming and pure-minded creature will be your wife."

When they entered the salon, the eyes of Lady Walmer flashed with rage and jealousy, as she marked the expression of happiness in their countenances; but Arlington was too joyous to think of her, or if he did for a moment, it was only to rejoice that the next day she would be no longer present to interrupt his felicity. He felt that never had Emily been so dear to him as at this moment, and his indifference to Lady Walmer had grown almost into repugnance.

At length the *soirée* which had dragged so heavily along, drew to its close; and as the ladies rose to leave the drawing-room, Lady Walmer found means to slip a note into the hand of Arlington.

On going to his room, he read the following lines, almost illegible, from the trembling of the hand that traced them.

"It is necessary, for my peace of mind, that we meet once more, where I can speak to you without witnesses or interruption;—no place offers itself, but my dressing-room; so come there, as soon as you have perused this."

The first impulse of Arlington was to decline the interview; but then, came the reflection, that she would sit up expecting him; and this avoidance of her would appear ungrateful, and unkind.

He reflected a quarter of an hour, his mind in a chaos of agitation, when at length he came to the resolution of writing to her, and leaving the letter at her door.

He wrote a hurried and almost incoherent letter, in which he avowed his love for, and engagement to Emily, and the

impossibility, under such circumstances, of having a clandestine interview with her who demanded it.

Feeling the necessity of candour, and actuated by the hope that his confession might excite the better feelings of Lady Walmer, he opened his whole soul to her, and his passion for her rival was exposed with all the fervour which his pen could give it. He prayed her to pardon his passed folly and presumption, in having sought to win her pity to a passion unworthy of her purity; and bidding her farewell, assured her of his eternal friendship, and respect.

He took this letter to the door of her dressing-room, tapped gently at it, intending, when it was opened, to place the letter in her hand, and retire; but at the moment she appeared at the door, footsteps were heard advancing, light flashed along the corridor, and Lady Walmer, grasping his arm, pulled, rather than led, him into the room, and with trembling hands again fastened it.

She had scarcely done so, when the voice of her husband, demanding entrance, threw both Arlington and herself into a state of agitation difficult to be imagined. To push Arlington behind the window-curtain, and open the door, was the work of a moment, and her despair may be conceived, when she saw Lord Walmer, *en robe de chambre*, place himself at full length on a sofa, a position indicating his intention of not soon quitting it.

"Well, my love, have you observed how very coldly, not to say uncivilly, the Vavasours have behaved to us?" asked Lord Walmer.

"I have not paid much attention to them," replied the agitated wife (whose heart throbbed violently, while she endeavoured to conceal her emotion), "they are very dull people, and shocking bores."

"You must except Lady Emily," said Lord Walmer, "for she is as agreeable as she is beautiful. Arlington is a happy dog, to get such a wife; every man in London will envy him!"

Lady Walmer felt enraged that Arlington should hear such warm commendations of Emily, and jealousy and envy sent their pangs to her heart.

"How fondly attached she seems to him," resumed Lord Walmer; "I have caught those beautiful eyes of her's fixed on his face fifty times since we have been here, with an expression of such deep tenderness as I never saw before, and then withdrawn, as if fearful of being observed."

Lady Walmer writhed at every word her husband uttered.

At this moment, her lap-dog, Medore, who had been asleep,

awoke by the voice of Lord Walmer, ran from under the sofa, and begun barking violently.

"Hang that dog! what the deuce is the matter with him?" said Lord Walmer.

"Nothing, nothing!" replied Lady Walmer, terrified lest the dog should approach the window; "Medore, Medore, be quiet!" but in vain were her calls to the dog; he barked still louder than ever, and ran round the room, continually approaching the window. Her heart almost died within her when Lord Walmer rose, and walked towards it, exclaiming, "Don't be frightened—there is a cat or something here."

"No, no!" said Lady Walmer, seizing his arm, "there is nothing there; let us drive Medore out of the room;" and she attempted to catch the dog."

"Depend on it," said Lord Walmer, "there is a cat behind that curtain, for you see Medore always runs towards it—nay, I'm sure I saw it move. Do not be alarmed," observing her agitation, "I shall soon see what is there."

"Oh, do not!" said Lady Walmer, gasping with terror, and holding him by the arm.

"Why, my love, this is quite childish; I never saw you nervous before," said the husband; but at this moment, the dog ran behind the curtain, barking more violently than ever, and Lord Walmer, breaking from the grasp of his wife, pursued Medore, and lifting the curtain—beheld Arlington!

To convey a description of the expression of the countenance of each of the trio, would be impossible. Arlington attempted to speak, but Lord Walmer interrupted him, by saying.

"All explanation, my lord, is now unnecessary. Your concealment behind that curtain, and this lady's anxiety to prevent my approaching it, explains all. For you, madam," casting a glance of anger and contempt at his wife, "you see me now for the last time; I prohibit you from ever again addressing the husband you have betrayed and dishonoured; and the laws of my country shall soon dissolve the ties that unite us."

He approached the door to leave the room, but Lady Walmer clung to his arm.

"Oh, leave me not! do not abandon me, I implore, I intreat of you!" cried she in agony; "I am innocent, indeed I am innocent!"

"Dare you make such an assertion, after the discovery I have made?" said the enraged husband. "No, madam, I am no longer your dupe;" and so saying, he scornfully freed himself from her grasp, and left the chamber.

Lady Walmer sank fainting on the sofa; and Arlington, nearly as overcome as herself, was almost incapable of administering her any assistance. He felt as if in a fearful dream; the occurrences of the last few minutes seemed to comprise hours of torture: and as his eyes fell on the insensible form of her who had caused all this mischief, he turned from her with a sensation almost approaching to loathing. The future,—the gloomy, interminable future,—seemed unfolded to his prophetic gaze, and Emily, his promised bride, was never loved with such intense passion as at this moment, when he felt there was an impassable barrier placed between them for ever.

On coming to her senses, Lady Walmer shuddered when her eyes fell on Arlington. There was an expression of despair on his brow that alarmed her, and she hardly dared to meet his glance.

"Is there no hope?" she at length exclaimed. "Can you not go to him, and convince him of my innocence?" but the last word expired on her tongue, as conscience whispered her how faulty, how odious, had been her conduct.

"But how account for my being concealed in this room?" asked Arlington.

"True, true," uttered she in agony, "all, all is lost, and I am wretched for life!"

Had she said *we*, instead of *I*, he might have pitied her; but, seeing her wholly engrossed by self, he remembered with bitterness, that *she* was the cause of all this wretchedness. An intuitive feeling of what was passing in his mind, rushed through her's, and, turning from him, she exclaimed, "Leave me, leave me! would that we had never met!"

Arlington seized a pen, and unable to trust himself to speak, he wrote a few hasty lines, saying, that though the unwilling cause of her misfortune, he was willing to lighten or share it, and should wait in his own room her further commands. He placed this note on the table before her, and silently withdrew;—being himself, and leaving her, a prey to the most bitter regret for the past, and the most fearful forebodings for the future.

CHAPTER XIII.

"Quand on a pu dire : J'ai un ami! qu'il doit être affreux ce mot : Je l'ai eu!"

It is long since we left Desbrow, pursuing his melancholy journey to Ayrshire Abbey, and not even the anticipation of seeing his beloved Cecile could cheer his depressed spirits.

He arrived late in the evening, and as he looked from his carriage, while it wound through the park, the leafless trees, through which the wind mournfully whistled, as in fitful gusts it shook their branches, or scattered the dead leaves in the air, seemed in harmony with his *sombre* feelings.

How lately had he passed through this park, when, gay in verdure, the trees wore their leafy honours, and innumerable feathered choristers sent forth their glad notes. The amiable and excellent mistress of those domains was then in high health, glad and gladdening all around her : but where was she now? in the grave—over which the night-winds sighed her requiem. The lamps threw a lugubrious gleam over the train of servants in deep mourning, that lined the hall ; and their serious faces showed that their mourning was not merely external. He was told that the Marquis and Mademoiselle de Bethune were in their dressing-rooms, and he hastened to change his dress.

The duties of the toilette performed, he entered the library, and found himself in the presence of Cecile, Lord Ayrshire, and a stranger, whom he concluded to be the father of his betrothed.

The meeting was almost a silent one, for all were unable to express the feelings with which their hearts were overflowing. The thoughts of each were with the dead ; and they dared not trust themselves to express them but by affectionate pressures of the hand.

The marquis, after a few minutes had restored him to composure, presented Desbrow to the Comte de Bethune, who advanced ceremoniously, and, *à la française*, offered to embrace him; while Desbrow, unaccustomed to this Gallic habit, drew back astonished, and held out his hand, *à l'anglaise*, which the

comte coldly touched, evidently piqued at Desbrow's *manque d'usage*, as he considered it.

Cecile had never appeared so beautiful to the eyes of her lover, as at this moment; her deep mourning, contrasted with the exquisite fairness of her complexion, and the pensive expression of her lovely face, had something so calm, yet touching, in it, that during several minutes he could not take his eyes from her. Grief seemed to have lent her beauty a purer, higher character; and resignation rendered that grief almost holy.

When Desbrow did look from her, he was struck by the change in the appearance of Lord Ayrshire; he seemed as if ten years had been added to his age; his cheeks were hollow, his eyes dim and swollen, his shoulders bowed, and his whole person was emaciated.

His next glance fell on the Comte de Bethune, who might have served as the type of a French nobleman of *l'ancien régime;*—tall and thin, with great personal beauty, yet with a cold and repulsive countenance, and a manner, from which dignity and studied politeness seemed to have excluded cordiality.

Dinner was announced, while yet Desbrow was making his mental observations on the comte; and Lord Ayrshire, placing the hand of Cecile within that of her lover, led the way to the *salle à manger*.

The now vacant place, which Desbrow had seen so often filled by Lady Ayrshire, renewed the feelings of all three;—there was the same room, the same plate,—servants, all was as in past times, but *her* presence was wanted, who had been wont to spread happiness around.

The repast would have been a silent one, but for the comte, who expatiated with a culinary erudition, that would not have shamed Grimaud de la Reynière himself, on the different *entrées* and *entremets*, the *fumets* of the *gibier*, and the comparative merits of the grouse, ptarmegan and black cock, with the *coq de bruyère* and *gelinotte*, always according the preference to the *gibier* of his own favoured country, which none of the present party were disposed to dispute.

The wines of France then engrossed his conversation, and he dwelt with pleasure on their acknowledged superiority, naming those which ought only to be *tasted*, in order to prepare the palate for some other still more rare vintage, and those which might be *drunk*.

Though his incessant *bavardage* was a relief to the circle,

by preventing the necessity of their conversing, an effort to which each of the trio felt themselves to be incapable, yet it left the impression on their minds, of how obtuse must be *his* feelings who could thus show so little respect to theirs; and Desbrow saw the blush of shame mantle the pale cheek of Cecile, as her timid eye turned to observe the impression made on him by her father.

There is, perhaps, no situation more painfully embarrassing, than that in which persons are placed, when witnessing the display of the obtuseness or want of tact of near relations, before those on whom they are anxious that a favourable impression should be made.

Cecile felt this keenly, and the more so, as her deep regret for Lady Ayrshire rendered her almost indignant that her loss should be so little lamented by one who owed so much to her kindness, and that one, her parent.

Lord Ayrshire and Desbrow sympathized too truly in her feelings, not to be aware of what was passing in her mind; and both felt as if drawn still more fondly towards her, by observing all she suffered by her father's want of feeling.

When Cecile had withdrawn, and left the gentlemen to themselves, the comte made what he considered a complimentary speech to Desbrow, on his good fortune, on having secured the hand of a young lady, of whom, although his daughter, he must be permitted to say, any man might be proud.

Desbrow warmly assented, but when the comte added, the advantages to be derived by Desbrow's entering into one of the most noble and distinguished families in France, his assent was merely given by a bow; which the comte evidently considered a very insufficient mark of acknowledgment, as he quickly showed, by saying, in a tone of pique, that for his part, had he only consulted his own feelings, he must, notwithstanding his high opinion of Monsieur Desbrow, have preferred seeing his daughter allied to some one of the noble families of his own country, all of whom would doubtless be anxious to lay their honours at her feet, than to have her married in England.

This speech merited no flattering reply, and received none, for Desbrow felt that the only objection which ever presented itself to his mind, when he first loved Cecile, was the circumstance of her being of another country; an objection that he quickly forgot, when her qualities came to be known, and which he had never since remembered, until it was now so disagreeably obtruded on his attention.

Lord Ayrshire saw the danger of allowing the comte to con-

tinue the conversation much longer in the same strain; and endeavoured to turn it, by expressing his regret that he could not prevail on Comte de Bethune to pass a few months with him, that the marriage of Cecile might take place in Scotland, adding, "I shall be so solitary, that it would be a charity to stay with me."

"It is quite impossible, my dear lord," replied the comte; "*les convenances*,"—that first essential in the code of a Frenchman, and before which all others give way,—"preclude my daughter remaining under your roof, now that her cousin is no more; and demand that Mademoiselle de Bethune should be presented at the Court of France, before she changes her name. She has many relations, all anxious to renew their claims on her attention; and the period allotted for her mourning cannot be better employed, than in cultivating an acquaintance with her country, and distinguished connexions.—Monsieur Desbrow,"—bowing to him,—"will, I doubt not, see the propriety of this measure; and also, that of having the nuptial knot tied in France; as the marriage of a Bethune ought not to be celebrated elsewhere than in the capital where her ancestors have filled such distinguished situations."

The pompous airs of the comte seemed equally repugnant to Lord Ayrshire, as to Desbrow; both felt his presence a restraint on them, and were glad when coffee was announced, to interrupt his harangues.

During the evening, the comte seemed determined on saying, or doing, whatever was most likely to wound the peculiarities of Desbrow: on each of these occasions, Cecile would cast a beseeching look at her lover, who instantly checked the reply that rose to his lips, and her eyes thanked him for the forbearance, more eloquently than words could have done.

Never had Desbrow passed the hours so heavily at Ayrshire Abbey, as on this evening. To revert uninterruptedly to past happiness, would have been luxury to the state of restraint in which he felt himself placed: but at length, Lord Ayrshire, taking compassion on his visible uneasiness, proposed a party of piquet to the comte, which left the lovers at liberty to converse together for an hour, at the other side of the room.

Their first words were spent in deploring the loss of Lady Ayrshire. Before them was her chair, placed near the small table appropriated to her use, and which still wore its wonted appearance. The vase, filled with flowers; her books, paper-knife, smelling-bottle, and pencil, were all as when she had used them; as her Lord had requested that they might not be touched.

Her portrait, a striking likeness, hung nearly over the chair, she used to occupy, and seemed to wear her own benignant smile, as if regarding the loved objects around her.

Cecile pointed out all this to Desbrow, knowing that he could sympathize in the feelings they awakened; and still further excited his regret and reverence for the dead, by telling him how kindly and affectionately he had been named by her, in her last hours. "I know that you will bear with my father's peculiarities," said Cecile; "he has never lived much in England, and has certain prejudices, that we must rather sooth than irritate. I am too English, not to feel this, and not to be aware how it must strike you, but I hope, I trust, you will bear with him."

What would not Desbrow have borne with, to be so intreated! and he felt at the moment the promise he repeated, that she might count on his submitting to anything, or everything, rather than give her a moment's pain.

Both felt happier after this conversation, and to prove its beneficial results on him, Desbrow became more attentive to the Comte de Bethune, and did all in his power to cultivate his good opinion.

The second day, he ventured to express his regret, that the brother of Cecile had not accompanied his father to England; and repeated his desire to become known to him.

"These are not times," replied the comte, "mon cher Monsieur Desbrow, for a military man to quit his post; my son will be always found near his sovereign, who has, alas! but too much occasion for devoted adherents, to stem the tide of popular disaffection, which threatens to overset his throne, and destroy his kingdom."

"We must hope," said Lord Ayrshire, "that France is not in so dangerous a state as you think."

"Would that it were not!" said the comte; "but daily experience proves, that unless Charles X. has firmness enough to adopt the measures recommended to him by those who have the sense to oppose themselves to the overwhelming flow of anarchy, which, under the name of liberal principles, aims at oversetting the throne and the altar, all must be lost. The press must be put down, Monsieur Desbrow, or it will put us down; but, luckily, the king has now those around him, who are devoted to *l'ancien régime*, and determined to oppose the encroachments of the liberals."

Lord Ayrshire saw by the heightened colour and flashing eye of Desbrow, that he was on the point of giving vent to the feelings which the speech of Comte de Bethune excited; and

giving him an expressive look, to deprecate any remonstrance, he hastened to change the subject.

When Desbrow found himself alone with Lord Ayrshire, the latter spoke to him as follows:—

"I am aware, my dear friend, that such is your affection for Cecile, that your happiness depends on a union with her; if, therefore, you wish that nothing should occur to oppose this union, beware of offending the political, religious, or national prejudices of her father. With many good qualities, he is full of prejudices, and untolerating and unforgiving to those who offer any opposition to them: bear with him, for argument is useless,—nay worse,—would only lead to disagreement, in which your happiness, and that of Cecile, may be compromised. I wish your marriage could have taken place in England, and so wished my dear lost wife; for, knowing the character of Comte de Bethune, as I do, I like not the idea of our dear Cecile being confided to one, who, though her father, is so uncongenial to her in every respect; but it cannot be helped, and we must only hope the best, and avoid every possible occasion of offending the too susceptible comte. Cecile is ill at ease with him; he is jealous of her affection for me, and her attachment to England, and all that is English: this feeling breaks forth continually, but she bears it admirably; we, my dear friend, must take care not to add to her sufferings by exciting his displeasure, which is but too easily aroused on the most trivial subjects, where his prejudices are touched, and they are continually on the *qui vive*."

Desbrow felt the justice of Lord Ayrshire's counsel, and the friendship which dictated it, and he promised to follow it strictly: a resolution which it required no little self-command to fulfil, as scarcely an hour passed, in which the Comte de Bethune did not try his forbearance to its utmost extent, by the display of illiberality and prejudices more suited to the feudal system of *l'ancien régime*, of which he was always lamenting the suppression, than the enlightened views of the nineteenth century.

But well was Desbrow repaid for his forbearance towards the father, by the affection and confidence of the charming daughter, who became every hour more dear to him, as her inestimable qualities became more known. Her touching attention to Lord Ayrshire, endeavouring to anticipate his wishes, and to supply the place of *her* he had lost; her sweetness and patience under all the wayward humours of her father,

and the tact with which she soothed them; but, above all, her frank, yet modest manner of marking her affection for himself, enchanted her lover, and there was no personal sacrifice that he would not willingly have made to insure her happiness.

Desbrow wished much that the Comte de Bethune should see one, or both of his estates, and consulted Cecile on the propriety of engaging him to visit them; but the blush that rose to her cheek as she hesitated to reply, told him *she* wished it not.

After a moment's silence, she looked affectionately in his face, and thus addressed him: "It is painful to expose, even to the one most dear to us, the foibles of a parent; but yet, you are so good, and so forbearing, that I may remind you that my poor father lost an immense fortune by the Revolution; his *châteaux*, estates,—all were confiscated: and when he sees, or is engaged to see, the mansion and domains of others, he reverts with bitterness to those he once possessed, and becomes soured by the reminiscence. He is proud, very proud, which we must forgive, when we reflect that it is his present comparative poverty that makes him so; for all who knew him in his splendour, declares that he was then free from this weakness. He suffers acutely at the idea of my going to you a portionless bride; and the sight of your residences might only awaken painful feelings."

It was thus that Cecile softened down the asperities of her father and lover, and rendered herself each hour dearer to the latter. Upon her parent, too, she must have produced a similar effect, but that all his affection, and what was still much stronger, his pride, were centered in his only son, the supporter of his ancient name, and the inheritor of the titles, and the dilapidated part of the fortune of his ancestors, which the indemnity had restored to him. This son was his idol, the constant subject of his conversation, and referred to on all occasions, as one from whose opinion there was no appeal.

There is something in the natures of even the best persons, which induces them to hear with distaste, if not doubt, the continued praises of some one unknown; and when the Athenians banished Aristides, because they were tired of hearing him called "The Just!" they were true to that alloy in human nature, which turns with disgust from praise bestowed on another, however well merited. A woman, held up as a beauty before seen, is sure to appear less handsome (however beautiful she may be) to those who have been hearing exaggerated

descriptions of her; and virtue and talents, extravagantly praised, are apt to engender doubts of their existence, or disinclination towards their possessor.

Lord Ayrshire, with all his good-nature, became tired of hearing the excellence, mental and personal, of Auguste de Bethune, who, if his partial father was to be believed, was a second Admirable Crichton; and Desbrow too, found himself, *malgré lui*, rather unfavourably disposed towards this "faultless monster," who was represented as "handsomest, wisest, virtuest, best."

Cecile alone felt disposed to render her brother justice. She remembered with fondness, the fine, impetuous, high-spirited boy, with curly locks, brilliant eyes, and inexhaustible gaiety, who was always either quarrelling with or kissing her, when they met as children; and though a long period had now elapsed since she had seen him, she felt all a sister's partiality, though she had sufficient tact and perception, to wish that her father praised him less frequently and extravagantly.

It was difficult for Desbrow to command his temper, when he heard the Comte de Bethune find fault with Cecile's deportment and mode of walking, observing, "*C'est bien anglais; je vous demande pardon, messieurs, mais nous changerons tout cela à Paris.*" Her toilette and tournure were also censured by her fastidious father, who repeated his longing desire that she might profit from the taste and address of the Parisian modistes.

Now, Desbrow was justly proud of the tournure of Cecile, which was peculiarly elegant and dignified; and her toilette, which was always simple, yet well chosen and becoming, fully met his approbation; so that he could with difficulty restrain his impatience, when he heard the tasteless comments of the Comte. But an appealing look of intreaty from her, silenced the defence that was rising to his lips, and which could not have failed to offend her father; and he contented himself with feeling an increased admiration for all that the Comte disapproved.

The presence of Comte de Bethune, imposed a restraint on the three persons with whom he was thrown, that was every hour more painfully felt. Lord Ayrshire kindly endeavoured to occupy him for an hour or two in the evening, at piquet or chess, during which time Desbrow, seated by Cecile, was consoled for the constraint he had endured during the long day; but so quickly flew the moments near her, that the interminable hours passed in the society of her father, seemed of

endless duration, by the force of contrast,—at least, so thought her lover!

At last, the day arrived, fixed for the departure of father and daughter; and Lord Ayrshire and Desbrow, anxious to be with Cecile as long as possible, determined to accompany them to Dover. Gladly would they have gone to France, to save her from being wholly left to the uncongenial society of her parent, but that Lord Ayrshire felt that, in his affliction, the gaieties of the French capital would be as unbearable as *inconvenantes*; and he knew sufficient of Comte de Bethune, to be aware that the period of Cecile's residence there, would be devoted to introducing her to all his connexions and acquaintances.

Desbrow, feeling the incompatibility of his character, with that of his future *beau-père*, thought it best to avoid personal intercourse with him, until the period fixed for his marriage had arrived; and much as he regretted tearing himself away from Cecile, he submitted to it, looking forward to the end of June, the time named for his nuptials, with all the impatience of an ardent lover.

CHAPTER XIV.

"On eût dit un ange aux ailes coupées, tombé du haut des cieux sur la terre, et passé de la joie aux larmes, sans transitions, sans faute, et sans chûte."

The morning that was to see Cecile leave the mansion, which had been from childhood her happy home, broke heavily on her weary eyelids, after a sleepless night passed in painful retrospection and gloomy anticipation.

How many thoughts of the past, the happy past, rose up before her, in which her dear departed friend, her more than mother, was mingled.

By the little bed, on which she now reclined, had that dear friend sat, hour after hour, supporting her languid head, and pressing her throbbing temples, when two years before a fever had attacked her.

The noiseless step, the gentle voice, the soothing words of affection, which, during the long hours of illness, she had so

often gratefully remarked, all now returned to memory, and tears of sorrow streamed from her eyes at the recollection.

About to leave, perhaps for ever, the scene where her happy childhood had been passed, she felt as if again losing Lady Ayrshire, who had been the principal source of all that happiness.

While she remained at Ayrshire Abbey, surrounded by so many objects, that every moment reminded her of that dear friend, she seemed not totally lost to her; but now she should be withdrawn from even this melancholy consolation; and a miniature, and lock of hair, were all that remained to her, of one, whose unabated affection she could never forget, and whose memory she revered.

She left her pillow at an early hour; and, having made all the preparations for her journey, she stole silently from her chamber, and sought the church, half-a-mile distant from the house, where reposed the mortal remains of one who had so well supplied the place of mother to her.

It was one of those gloomy mornings in winter, when lowering clouds and a drizzling rain add dreariness to every object around. The leafless trees, stunted grass, and withered shrubs, all emblems of mortality, were so in harmony with the melancholy of her feelings, that as she entered the church, and sank by the side of the tomb which covered the mouldering frame of the beloved dead, her tears and sobs could no longer be suppressed, and she yielded to her emotions, until their intensity subdued their violence, and left only that calm feeling of resignation which religion alone can give, and which is the only balm for sorrow.

The parting between Cecile and the old servants, who had loved her from her infancy, was highly touching; and Desbrow, as he witnessed, saw in it an earnest of the happiness, she, who was so beloved by the dependants of another, would bring to his home.

Their journey was made in the travelling-coach of Lord Ayrshire, which held the four, and the carriages of Comte de Bethune and Desbrow followed. By this arrangement, they enjoyed the presence of Cecile, though the sense of that enjoyment was often interrupted by the querulous observations of the comte, who found out, with his accustomed national partiality, that the paved roads of *la belle France* were infinitely superior to the acadamized one, over which they were gliding with an almost unconscious motion; and that the views were little, mean, and bounded, looking like those of a gentleman's

park, instead of glancing over a vast prospect of open country, as in France.

Nay, even the English carriages came in for their share of his censures; they were so much too easy, the double springs prevented that motion, so *agreeable* and *healthy* in French carriages, which rendered a drive in one of them as conducive to the acceleration of the circulation of the blood as horse exercise. But in all English vehicles, one felt as if seated in an easy-chair, no exercise, no movement, and consequently no appetite; though, to judge from the specimen he gave of it at every inn at which the party stopped, one might have arrived at a different conclusion.

The *trottoirs* in the streets were found to be most inconvenient, as they took up so much space, for the accommodation of pedestrians, generally composed of the canaille, which might have been better employed, in affording place for the equipages of the aristocracy.

The dinners at the inns were pronounced to be detestable; the cooking, execrable: and the want of *les petits vins de France*, a serious grievance, as the *vin de Bordeaux* was too strong, and the other wines, *trop capiteux*.

Cecile seemed to suffer so much from the fastidiousness and prejudices of her father, that Lord Ayrshire and Desbrow endeavoured to avert even the appearance of dissent from his opinions; and by this forbearance, the journey passed off without any disagreeable discussion, though three of the travellers felt, that to their forbearance alone was this harmony to be attributed; the fourth was too much occupied with self, to think of aught else.

A detour was made, to avoid passing through London, and our party, on arriving at Dover, learned that a packet was to sail for Calais next morning.

They passed a silent and sorrowful evening at the inn, all, except the comte, painfully occupied with the thoughts of their approaching separation, which weighed heavily on their minds.

Cecile found a few moments to converse alone with Desbrow, and employed them chiefly to intreat that he would devote as much of his time as possible to her dear Lord Ayrshire.

"I shall no longer be near to console him," said the affectionate girl; and he will need the presence of some one who was acquainted with *her* he laments, to whom he can talk of her, and know that his praises and regrets are felt and reciprocated."

Desbrow promised to devote his whole time and attention to him; and this promise was a new link in the chain of affection, which united him to Cecile.

Before parting for the night, Cecile told Desbrow, that she could give him tidings of his friend Arlington, as she had found a letter from her dear Lady Emily Vavasour, at Dover, which had been forwarded from Ayrshire Abbey, announcing her approaching marriage with Lord Arlington, and deeply regretting that the recent affliction of Lord Ayrshire precluded her from intreating Cecile's presence at her nuptials.

"They must be married ere this," said she, "as the letter is of long date." If you knew dear Emily, as I do," continued Cecile, "how you would rejoice at the happiness of your friend! She is all goodness, and beautiful as good;—I love her as though she were my sister."

Desbrow felt highly gratified at this intelligence, for the sincerity of his attachment made him rejoice that his friend had chosen so wisely; and he rejoiced the more, that their wives, by a happy chance, should be such dear friends, as to ensure their being able to keep up the same cordial intercourse that had ever subsisted between them.

He communicated this sentiment to Cecile, who partook of it, and they dwelt, with pleasure, on the thought of their future intimacy.

At an early hour next morning, after a hurried attempt at breakfast, the party left the Ship Inn, to embark on board the steam-boat.

Desbrow gave his arm to Cecile, and again and again repeated the vows of unalterable love, while he led her towards the vessel.

Partings are always painful to those who are attached; but when the sea is about to divide us from those we love, the bitterness is increased, as the distance seems extended, and a vague dread of every risk, to which that fickle element exposes its voyagers, steals over even the manly heart,—a dread still more felt by the susceptible and ductile one of woman.

Lord Ayrshire and Desbrow entered the ship, to remain with Cecile to the last moment; and both were supporting her while they endeavoured to speak that comfort to her, which they were themselves far from feeling; when, at the same moment, all three recognised Lord Arlington walking towards them, sustaining on his arm a lady enveloped in a shawl and mantle, whose face was concealed by a deep bonnet and black lace veil which covered it.

"There is Lord Arlington, and that must be my dear Emily," exclaimed Cecile; "oh! how fortunate to meet her, and by accident, when I have such need of her consolation!"

So saying, she flew, rather than ran, towards the supposed Emily, and had clasped her in her arms ere she discovered that the lady was, Lady Walmer; with whom she was but slightly acquainted.

She explained her mistake, and was rather surprised at observing that lady shrink back, turning alternately pale and red, and nearly overcome by agitation, requesting Arlington to lead her to the cabin. While this scene was passing between the ladies, Desbrow had approached Arlington, with extended hand and cordial greeting; but, to his amazement, he drew back, evidently distressed and embarrassed, waving his hand to Desbrow, as if to intreat him to retire; while he hurried Lady Walmer into the cabin.

All this scene was inexplicable to Desbrow; and, to Cecile's repeated expressions of wonder as to its meaning, he could make no reply. At this moment, a pencil note from Arlington was brought to him, intreating to learn the place of his destination, as he had much to communicate, and wished to do so by letter.

Desbrow had only time to write a line, saying that he was returning directly to London, where a letter would find him, when the packet weighed anchor, and Lord Ayrshire and he, having taken a hurried adieu of Cecile and her father, left the ship.

It was perhaps well for Desbrow, that he had to console Lord Ayrshire, who, in this parting with her whom he had so long considered as his child, felt the wound inflicted on his peace by the death of his excellent wife, bleed afresh; and Desbrow tried to forget all selfish feelings, in endeavouring to restore him to serenity.

The astonishment which the unaccountable apparition and manner of Arlington had excited, served also to divert his attention from his own regrets, and he and his friend pursued their route to town, there to await the promised communication from Arlington. A thousand vague fears flitted through the mind of Desbrow. Why was Arlington on board the packet, and *alone* with Lady Walmer, when he believed him married, or on the point of marriage, with Lady Emily?

All this seemed incomprehensible, and appeared still more so, when, on arriving in town, he found a letter from Arlington, which had been forwarded to him from the country, dated ten days before, announcing that all was settled for his approaching

nuptials, which were to take place in the course of the following week. A passage in this letter struck Desbrow forcibly; it was as follows—

"You were right, my dear friend, when you told me that my passion for Lady Walmer was an illusion which absence could not fail to destroy, as I should one day be ready to admit, when my heart became really sensible of the power of love. That moment has arrived, and I admit that you were right, for the sentiment Emily inspires, differs as wholly from the unhallowed passion I felt for Lady Walmer, as does Emily from that lady.

"I feel ready to attempt all that virtue could dictate, since I have loved Emily, as, alas! I was ready to execute the impulses of guilty passion, when I sighed for Lady Walmer.

"When you know Emily, you will think me one of the most fortunate of mortals; and you will not value her the less because she is the chosen friend of your Cecile, of whom she speaks nearly as warmly as you would do.

"We may well congratulate each other on the happy prospects that await us; but I must not forget, that to your counsel I owe my escape from the inglorious thraldom which enchained me in London, and might, nay, *would*, have precluded the union, which now is ready to crown my wishes."

When Desbrow had perused this letter, he was more than ever astonished at what even before appeared so unaccountable; the more he reflected, the less could he explain the enigma. That something extraordinary had occurred, he felt certain; and that it was of a disagreeable and improper nature, was scarcely less doubtful. "To-morrow," thought he, "must bring me a letter from Arlington, explanatory of all this, and until then, let me try to think as well of my friend as I can under such suspicious appearances."

The pale face and agitated manner of Arlington were recalled to memory; and Desbrow pitied him, ere he knew what he had to pity.

CHAPTER XV.

"It is the nature of man, never to feel love so violently, as when circumstances arise to oppose his passion."

We left Arlington returning to his chamber, after his luckless interview with Lady Walmer. He had been but a few minutes absent from it, but what had he not suffered? and what a fearful effect was that brief period likely to exercise over his future destiny?

He threw himself into a chair, and looked around, as if to be sure that he was not in some frightful dream. There was every thing just as he had left them; a cheerful fire blazing, and the pen not yet dry, with which he had written what he intended to be an eternal farewell to her who had caused all his unhappiness; but now, that object, for which he felt almost a dislike, had stepped between him and happiness, and he reflected with dismay that he might be condemned to the wretched fate of wearing out a dreary existence with her.

He shuddered at the thought, and at that moment his glance fell on the portrait of Emily, placed before him on the table. Her dove-like eyes seemed to look at him with that expression of affection and softness, which were their peculiar characteristic. The painter had caught the speaking look of her mouth, and had done justice to the extreme beauty of her countenance, which never struck Arlington with so profound a sense of admiration as at this moment, when he felt he had probably lost her for ever. Scattered about the table, were various little gifts of her's, each, and all, endeared by some fond recollection. They brought a gush of tenderness to his heart, and Arlington, the hitherto gay and happy Arlington, felt unable to resist the emotions that overpowered him, and for the first time since his childhood, wept with uncontrolable anguish.

All the confidential intercourse, and happy hours passed with Emily, seemed to flit before him; and then, came the thought,—the painful, mortifying thought,—that henceforth she would banish him from her heart, and never think of him but with disgust and dislike. At one moment, he determined

to write to her, and tell her all, but after a little reflection, he asked himself,—Could he—dare he, sully her pure mind, with the revelation of his unhallowed entanglement with a married woman?—No; it was impossible. He then thought of writing to Lord Vavasour, and explaining the whole business to him; but, ought he to expose to the condemnation of another, the unfortunate woman who had caused all this misery by her unhappy attachment to him? No! it was more his duty to screen and protect her; and painful,—wretched,—as the performance of that duty must render him, he would not shrink from it.

He attempted not to gloss over the horrors of his situation; they were all exposed to his view, and bitter were his feelings, as he contemplated their probable results. He expected every hour to receive a communication from Lady Walmer, and, in this expectation, remained sunk in the chair into which he had thrown himself on entering the chamber.

More than once he fancied he had caught the sound of footsteps in the corridor, and he started with all the trembling anxiety of the culprit who expects to hear his doom pronounced. But again the sounds died away,—all was silent,—and he sank back into his previous state of benumbing torpor.

At length, a thought flashed across his mind,—the letter he had written to Lady Walmer, and placed in her hand, she would be sure to read it,—would see how fondly, how wholly, he was devoted to another; and if she possessed but one spark of generosity, or feminine delicacy, she would not,—she could not,—accept the sacrifice which his being detected in her chamber had forced him to offer. No! she would fly his presence, rather than suffer him to partake her lot; she would return to her relations, and remain with them, leaving him free to devote his future life to his adored Emily. There was happiness,—there was rapture in the thought; and he blessed his stars for having written the letter.

Hour after hour rolled heavily away; and, at length, the sound of persons moving in the house was distinctly audible. In the next minute, he heard a carriage driven to the door. His window commanding a view of the sweep in front of the entrance to the vestibule, he drew aside the curtains, and saw Lord Walmer enter the travelling carriage which had previously conveyed his suite; and then his valet de chambre having mounted the seat behind, it was driven away as rapidly as our post-horses could whirl it.

This was death to his hopes, as it proved that all chance of explanation, or reconciliation between the husband and wife, was at an end. She was left,—abandoned,—deserted,—and *he*,—*he*, was the cause of all this. His temples throbbed, and his head ached, almost to bursting; the blood seemed to recede from his heart, and to mount to his brain; he felt a sense of suffocation, that rendered the fresh air indispensable; and hastily changing his evening costume for one more appropriate, he descended the stairs, and rushed, rather than walked, into the pleasure-grounds.

It was one of those lovely, bright clear mornings, as rare as they are precious in our climate in winter; the dew-drops gemmed the evergreen trees and shrubs, with which the grounds were thickly planted, and the bright hue of their verdure almost made one forget that it was not spring.

The sun rose in unclouded splendour; the dew-drops, reflecting its rays, sent forth a thousand *brilliant* sparkles; the birds carolled their matin notes of joy, and all nature seemed to put on fresh charms, as if refreshed by night.

The freshness of the morning air, which fanned the forehead of Arlington, restored him to some degree of calmness; but when, on looking around at the beautiful and picturesque grounds, the thought that he was viewing them for the last time, presented itself to his mind; he felt, as did our first parent when about to be driven from Paradise, and cast "his lingering look behind."

At a sudden turn of a walk, Arlington almost ran against some person, and at a glance discovered that it was Emily. He stood as if transfixed to the spot, scarcely able in the confusion and agitation of the moment, to reply to her mild yet cordial greeting.

The gentle girl, with looks beaming with affection and confidence, placed her arm within his, as she had been wont to do; and asked him why he, who was in general not an early riser, was abroad at that unusual hour? "But, I suppose," she continued, "this delicious morning tempted you, as it did me, for I rarely venture out so soon; yet could not resist the impulse to stroll in the pleasure grounds, while yet the dew hangs trembling on the leaves and herbs. But surely you are ill!" said Emily, struck with the change in Arlington's countenance; "your arm is tremulous, and your hand," laying her own small white and dimpled one on his, "is quite feverish. I see, I know you are suffering," said she, all her tenderness

excited by his evident indisposition; "let us return directly to the house, for indeed, dear Arlington, you are unfit to be abroad."

Her tenderness produced a violent revulsion in Arlington; his frame trembled, tears gushed to his eyes, and, no longer master of himself, he grasped the hands of Emily, and fixing his looks on her face, he passionately exclaimed,

"Emily, dear, adored Emily! if this should be our last meeting, let me have the consolation, the only one that now awaits me, of carrying with me the persuasion that you are convinced, that *you*,—and *you only*,—have ever been, can ever be,—loved by me! Oh! let me implore you, however appearances may be against me, never to let this conviction pass from your mind!"

It instantly occurred to Emily, that he referred to the scene of the song, two nights before, with Lady Walmer, when she had shown that she was distressed by it. Turning therefore to Arlington, she assured him, with all the warmth of her gentle nature, that she doubted not, never could doubt, his love; and intreated him to be convinced that he had her whole confidence.

Overcome by this display of her affection, and feeling how selfish, how cruel it was in him, under existing circumstances, to search to retain an interest in her heart, when it would so soon become her duty to banish him from it, he turned wildly from her; then pausing a moment, he seized her hand, and after passionately pressing it to his lips, abruptly hurried away; leaving the amiable girl, shocked and affected at his visible perturbation, which she wholly attributed to some violent and sudden attack of fever.

Arlington flew, rather than ran, to the house, and reached his chamber without encountering any of the family, Lord and Lady Vavasour not having yet left theirs'. On his table he found the following note from Lady Walmer, and he tore it open almost with loathing:—

"My doom is sealed;—Lord Walmer has left me, and for ever; and too well do I know the hearts of those who have called themselves my friends, to doubt that they will turn from the disgraced and ruined wife, with even more alacrity than they sought her in her prosperous days. I cannot, dare not, face that world, whose idol I have so long been.

"I wish to quit England for ever. Am I to count on you as my friend and protector? or will you, like the rest of those who have flattered and lured me to destruction, leave me to the ruin you have brought on my head? I shall go to ——, the

third post from this, where I shall wait your presence, or your answer."

Every line of this letter, excited fresh disgust in the mind of Arlington; the selfishness of the writer was so apparent, that he groaned in spirit when he reflected that the laws of honour compelled him to give his protection to, and to pass his future days with her. How did he execrate the artificial state of society, which forged such laws,—laws equally opposed to religion and morality, yet the violation of which would stamp him as a man who had deserted the woman he had ruined.

Had Lady Walmer read the letter he had addressed to her? was the next thought of Arlington. If she had, and yet could continue to claim his protection, she must be indeed lost to every feeling of delicacy; and if she had not, and still counted on his affection, how dreadful must be her anguish whenever she chanced to discover this written proof of his indifference to herself, and strong love for an other.

CHAPTER XVI.

"Those who make the opinion of the world the criterion of their conduct, are but too apt to neglect the dictates of religion and conscience."

On entering the house, he discovered, from his valet de chambre, that Lady Walmer had left the house during his absence from it; and this was some relief to his feelings, but how was *he* to leave it? and what excuse could he give? He would feign having received letters demanding his immediate presence in London.

No sooner had he formed this plan, than a note from Lord Vavasour, desiring to see him in the library, again threw him into a state of fresh agitation. He felt like a culprit going to receive his sentence of condemnation, as he entered the scene of so many happy hours; and the unusual sternnes and severity depicted on the brow of Lord Vavasour, proclaimed that Arlington in him was to find no unprejudiced judge.

A cold bow was the only mark of recognition Arlington met; he, who had been accustomed to be greeted by smiles and cordial shakes of the hand by Lord Vavasour. The difference shocked him, though he was prepared for a painful scene, by his consciousness of the thoroughly unworthy aspect under which his conduct must appear to the eyes of another.

"I have sent for you, Lord Arlington, on a most distressing subject," said Lord Vavasour, "but our relative situations render a frank explanation necessary, and give me the right of demanding it; though when your lordship will have read the letter I now place in your hands, you will, perhaps, think no explanation necessary, as, unfortunately, that seems to render excuse impossible."

Thus saying, he presented to Arlington a letter, written that morning by Lord Walmer, previous to his departure, detailing the scene of the night before, in the dressing-room of his wife, with his determination of never more seeing her; adding, that he thought it a duty to inform Lord Vavasour of the shameful conduct of the affianced husband of his daughter, who, when within a few days of marriage with her, and beneath the same roof, could so far violate all the laws of delicacy, morals, and religion, as to be found concealed in the apartment of a married woman; a conduct, he asserted, which left no room for doubt, or need for comment.

Lord Walmer went on to state, how much he felt grieved, that this scandalous proceeding should have taken place beneath the roof of Lord Vavasour, whose hospitality and confidence had been so shamefully abused.

Arlington perused this letter with varying and conflicting emotions; the truth of the allegations he could not refute; his pride and delicacy were deeply wounded, yet he shrank from even attempting to exculpate himself, at the expense of the woman who had caused all this misery.

His silence, his agitation, and, above all, the expression of deep wretchedness imprinted on his countenance, excited a feeling of pity in the generous heart of Lord Vavasour, which quelled the angry emotions that had previously reigned there.

He saw the struggle of Arlington, as he endeavoured to speak, and, in a kinder tone, he suggested, that perhaps he might prefer writing. Overcome by this change of manner, Arlington, no longer able to suppress his feelings, stated the whole case to Lord Vavasour; he dwelt, with candour, on his former reprehensible passion for Lady Walmer, and on the pains he had taken to excite a return in her breast; he related

how, influenced by the counsel of Desbrow, he had fled from London to avoid her, and how his whole heart having become devoted to Lady Emily, she had driven every other image from his mind. Here, overpowered by the intensity of his feelings, the big drops burst from his eyes, while Lord Vavasour, touched by what he had heard, and what he saw, held out his hand to him, and uttered a few words of kindness.

Arlington endeavoured to recover some degree of composure, while he stated all that had occurred between Lady Walmer and himself since her arrival. He thought that on such an occasion it would be no breach of confidence, to show her note, which he had forgotten to destroy, and related the contents of that which he had written in answer, with the intention of leaving it at her dressing-room door, when the arrival of Lord Walmer led to the fearful *dénouement* already described.

Lord Vavasour, who had lived too long in the gay world, and partaken too much of its follies and vices, to feel as much shocked as perhaps a father ought to have felt on such an occasion, was more inclined to pity than condemn Arlington.

All his censure was directed to Lady Walmer, on whose conduct he passed a severe and justly merited condemnation, but with a generosity only to be appreciated, by taking into consideration the more than distaste,—the positive antipathy,—with which he now regarded that unhappy woman. Arlington intreated his forbearance, and reminded him that it was the professions of attachment, and the constant attentions, which he had lavished towards her some months before, that had engaged her affection,—an affection which now would be the bane of his life.

"I have brought this misery on myself," said Arlington, "and if I only were to suffer, I should bear it as a man; but, when I reflect how it involves the happiness of others, I sink before the blow.—Lady Walmer claims my protection; it is the only amends I can make her for having deprived her of fame, home, and consideration. Can I, therefore, whatever the effort costs me, refuse to make it?"

"This is madness, folly," replied Lord Vavasour; "*she*, and she alone, has induced this catastrophe. As yet, too, she is unstained, save by levity and indelicacy, both of which appear to me much more visible in her conduct than affection. Your protection, therefore, as you call it, will only plunge you both into actual guilt; and had she a particle of virtue, would she not prefer enjoying the consolation of having sinned only in

appearance, to claiming a sacrifice from you, which must set the seal of reprobation on both? Go not to her; let her seek her family, who cannot abandon her at such a crisis: with them, or even alone, she will be more protected than she can be by you; for the protection which a lover offers to a married woman, so far from being one, only points her out as an adultress, and forfeits for ever her last claim to respectability. I talk not to you of the matter in a religious or moral point of view," continued Lord Vavasour; "because, unfortunately, religion and morals, which ought to be our guides in such cases are seldom considered: and worldly wisdom is the standard by which most men are influenced: but, in all points of view, let me intreat you not to add guilt to imprudence. Avoid this woman, for her sake as well as your own, and all may yet be well."

"But can I refuse the protection she claims? Can I desert her who has lost all for my sake?"

"If she had yielded to your seduction, and abandoned her home for you, I grant that, according to the received usage on such occasions, nay, more, according to humanity, you could not desert the woman you had ruined. But this is a totally different case,—you fled from her, to save her and yourself;—she followed you, and you still resisted her arts. For now that you have told me your past position with her, I must say, that her conduct since she entered beneath my roof, has been as unfeeling as it has been indelicate. She inveigles you to her dressing-room; you are surprised there by her husband, and the consequences are, that he casts her from him: but are you to condemn yourself to a life of misery and guilt, because you have been weak enough to temporize with her during the last three days; when, had you shown more firmness, all this *esclandre* would have been saved."

"True, true," groaned, rather than said, Arlington, "and never shall I forgive myself for my folly, my infatuation! Why did I not openly show her, that my whole soul was devoted to another, and thus check, at once, every display or indication of her fatal partiality? Still I owe her reparation; and, however painful is the task of making it, I must submit."

"While you are thinking so much of what is due to the feelings of this unworthy woman, you seem to have totally forgotten those of my daughter," said Lord Vavasour, angrily, "whose affections you have engaged, and whose hand would have been your's in a few brief days. What will be the feelings of my pure minded and innocent child, when she learns

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that the man with whom she hoped to pass her life, has fled with an adultress, and is living in sin and shame."

"Oh! name it not, if you would not drive me mad," said Arlington; "I see,—I feel,—all the wretchedness I have caused, and dare not contemplate it."

"Can you then hesitate," asked Lord Vavasour, "which you will doom to suffer;—the young and spotless girl, who looks on you as her affianced husband, or the practised coquette, who, spider like, has spun her web round you until, like a helpless fly, you are entangled and destroyed. If you had a particle of affection for this worthless woman, you should have no remonstrances from me, as I should consider you unworthy of them; but, seeing you are only actuated by a misjudged sense of honour, I would save you ere yet it be too late. Write to Lady Walmer, and refer her to the letter you placed in her hands, for a knowledge of your real sentiments;—as those sentiments were expressed before she was compromised with her husband, she cannot doubt their sincerity, or expect that the detection, caused by her own impropriety, ought to produce any change in them. She cannot, after such a letter, demand you to fly with her, and, if she could, it would prove her too selfish and unworthy to be entitled even to pity."

Arlington's heart was so wholly devoted to Lady Emily, that he was ready to adopt any line of conduct consistent with honour, that could preserve him the inestimable boon of her hand.

He, therefore, sat down to write to Lady Walmer, and with all the delicacy and generosity he so eminently possessed, after explaining his feelings, offered to divide his fortune with her, nay, to lay the whole of it at her feet; but that the affection he entertained for another, as well as his religious and moral sentiments, must, for ever, preclude his giving her his personal protection.

He had nearly concluded his letter, when a courier arrived, bringing him the painful intelligence of the sudden and dangerous illness of his father, who was seized by severe indisposition at Boulogne, on his return from a visit to the French capital, whence he was hurrying, to be present at the nuptials of his son.

He hastily closed his letter, adding a line, to state that he was setting off to join Lord Heatherfield; and, having despatched it, took an affectionate, but agitated, leave of Lady Emily, her father, and mother; and was, in half an hour from the courier's reaching him, on his route to Dover.

Lady Emily believed, that the agitation Arlington had betrayed, in their interview in the pleasure-grounds, had been caused by his anxiety about his parent, and his regret at their approaching separation; and her tenderness for him was enhanced by this, as she considered it a new proof of his affection for her.

Lord Vavasour hoped, that she might never learn the scene of the night before, and carefully concealed all knowledge of it from his wife.

CHAPTER XVII.

"En ce qu'on appelle fantaisie, amour, passion, on sait d'où l'on part, mais on ignore toujours où l'on arrivera."

Soon after Lady Walmer had written, as already stated, to Arlington, in looking for something in her writing-case, the letter he had put into her hand the night before, and which, from the agitation she had ever since endured, had escaped her recollection, now met her view. She had thrown it into the writing-case, when Lord Walmer knocked at the door, and now, having recognised the writing, she opened it. Rage, jealousy, wounded vanity, all rose up at the perusal of each line. Had she then compromised herself for ever, for a man who thought only of another, and who avowed, even to her, the deep love that other had inspired? Dreadful was the hurricane of passion that now devastated the ill-governed mind of this unhappy woman; tears, burning tears of anger and mortification, chased each other in torrents down her cheeks, as she mentally vowed that her innocent rival should not triumph over her; and that, if she could not command the affection of Arlington, she would, at least, never relinquish the right which she considered the detection of her misconduct gave her to his protection; and with the base selfishness, that belongs but to the weak and the wicked, she determined to exact what she now knew must be the most painful sacrifice from him, namely, his accompanying her to some foreign land, where she hoped her shame might remain unwitnessed, at least, by those who had hitherto composed her world, and whose altered looks she dared not encounter.

The opinions of that world had been the ordeal by which Lady Walmer had always guided her own conduct, and judged that of others; the impropriety or sinfulness of an action had never been taken into consideration, and her conscience had so long slumbered, that its powers had become inert and its whispers silenced.

What will the world think of it? was the only question that ever suggested itself to her mind; and her's was not a heart to be consoled by conscious innocence. If the *clique* she denominated the world chose to turn their backs on her,—a measure she knew them too well to doubt could not fail to occur, the moment her husband cast her from him—her reputation as a woman of honour and fashion,—terms not always synonymous,—was irretrievably lost; for she felt that Lord Walmer would not hesitate to denounce her. All, therefore, she could hope was, that in case of a divorce, a sense of honour might induce Lord Arlington to give her his name, and that in a foreign land she might take that place in society, which in England she could no longer expect to fill. All feeling of partiality for Arlington was now obliterated from her heart, because the vanity that governed that heart had been wounded by his preference for another; but, in proportion to her indifference for him, became her fixed determination to attach him to her for life, by throwing herself on his generosity, and high—though perhaps false—sense of honour; and thus attain the end which love could never have accomplished. She conned over the scene which she meant to act when he arrived; for of his arrival she allowed herself not to doubt, as she read over and over again the few lines he had placed on her table, before leaving her dressing-room, in which he offered to share the misfortune he had been the unwilling cause of drawing on her.

"I will never confess to him," said this heartless and coarse-minded woman, "that I have read the letter he brought to my door; I will pretend that, in the agitation of the moment, I threw it into the fire; and when he comes, I will affect to take for granted that he still feels for me the same tenderness he professed a few months ago."

It is shocking to reflect to how many meannesses,—nay, crimes,—vanity may urge its votaries: to have it made apparent to the world, that Lord Arlington's affection for her had triumphed over his engagement to the young and beautiful Lady Emily, Lady Walmer stooped to deception and artifice, and quelled the angry feelings of her art to enact the part of a loving and ruined woman, who had sacrificed all to affection.

Calculating the time that Lord Arlington would arrive, she made a studied toilette for his reception. Her beautiful hair was suffered to fall in confusion over the fair cheeks no longer tinged by rouge; her lustrous eyes were taught to assume a wo-fraught expression, and her graceful person lost none of its delicate proportions in the elegant dishabille in which it was attired.

Hour after hour passed, and still Arlington arrived not; at length came the letter already known to our readers, the perusal of which threw Lady Walmer into paroxysms of rage and despair. When the first ebullitions of her anger were over, she gave instant orders for post-horses, and set out for Dover, pursuing her route night and day, in the hope of overtaking Lord Arlington. Half dead with fatigue, she arrived there at seven o'clock in the morning, and learned that the steam-packet was to sail at ten. Ascertaining that Arlington was not at the inn where she stopped, she sent to the other, and discovered that he had arrived a few hours before, and was to embark in the vessel to sail that day. Her plans were instantly formed. She ordered a passage to be secured for herself and servants; and sent her carriage and luggage on board immediately. Then, having in some degree refreshed herself by a bath and an hour's repose, she left the inn at the appointed time, enveloped in a mantle and large shawl, her face concealed by a deep bonnet and veil, and leaning on the arm of her *femme-de-chambre*, proceeded to the pier. In a few minutes she saw Arlington arrive, and she contrived to enter the vessel the moment after he did.

Finding a lady close to him, without any male assistant to hand her over the luggage that impeded her steps, he offered her his hand, and had only touched it when she fell into his arms fainting, or rather affecting to faint. He supported her, and assisted to lift her veil to give her air, when to his horror and dismay, he recognised in the insensible form in his arms, the woman he least expected,—least desired,—to behold on earth. He felt as if his destiny was sealed; he turned with loathing from her, and humanity alone prevented his leaving her to the care of her maid, and the few persons around who were assisting her. She soon opened her eyes, and, fixing them on him, exclaimed—"The surprise,—the joy was too much for me; don't leave me, dear Arlington, or I shall expire."

He was supporting her to the cabin, when he met Desbrow

and his party; the embrace of Cecile, and the being mistaken for Lady Emily, was too much for the exhausted frame of Lady Walmer, and she now really suffered what she had before merely affected, a faintness that nearly overcame her.

To paint the feelings of Arlington would be impossible; he saw that his presence with Lady Walmer, under existing circumstances, must stamp conviction on the minds of Desbrow and his party, that she was under his protection, and must confirm every evil report respecting them. He knew that Mademoiselle de Bethune was the confidential friend of Lady Emily, and he felt the blush of shame mount to his cheek when he thought of her and Lord Vavasour hearing that he was thus publicly appearing with the woman to whom, only a few hours before, he had written to bid an eternal farewell. Who would —who could believe that the rencontre on board the packet was totally unexpected on his part?

All these thoughts passed through his mind, filling it by turns with anger, indignation, and sorrow, as he sat in his carriage on deck, having refused to attend to the thrice repeated summons of Lady Walmer to descend to the cabin.

Cecile remained on deck with her father, her tearful eyes often cast back to the white cliffs of England, where lay all her hopes, and her reflections little interrupted by the observations of the comte, who lamented that they had not sailed in one of the French packets, as their superiority over the English, in all respects, was, as he said, incontestible. Luckily, his observations were expressed in his native language, otherwise he would have found many of those around disposed to contradict, though incapable of convincing, him; he having made up his mind that every *thing French* must be infinitely superior to every thing English, and as unalterably determined never to conceal this liberal opinion. He repeatedly assured Cecile, that the nautical terms he heard passing around among the sailors, were barbarous, and grated on his ear; whereas in French, they were sonorous and harmonious.

Cecile could not resist observing, that this must arise from his ignorance of the language, for, as England had ever been mistress of the sea, the maritime terms must be analogous to the element to which they related.

She touched on a tender subject, for the comte instantly and angrily told her, that he denied, and should always deny, that her favourite nation were masters of the sea, as the French were always as ready to dispute the English rule over that

wide domain, as they had ever been to meet them on the land, where the prowess of his countrymen had gained them such unequalled and undeniable renown.

CHAPTER XVIII.

" Perdre le bonheur par sa faute, est la peine la plus amère pour les personnes qui ont de l'imagination. Un événement que le sort leur envoie, si affreux; un malheur désespéré a par son excès même quelque chose qui les calme; mais un bien perdu par leur faute, leur apparait sans cesse paré des plus brillantes images; elles le ressuscitent à chaque instant, pour le perdre encore avec plus d'amertume, et recomposent leurs doux rèves pour les voir s'évanouir encore."

No sooner had the packet entered the port of Calais, than Lady Walmer appeared on deck, and placed herself so close to the carriage of Arlington, that he could not quit it without coming in contact with her.

The moment he left it, she addressed him, and having stated, that she wished to have half an hour's conversation with him, requested that he would give her his arm to the inn.

To refuse was impossible, though he heartily wished himself a thousand miles away from her, and having disembarked, they proceeded to the hotel.

They were passed on their route to it, by Cecile and her father, which increased the moodiness and distaste already felt by Arlington, at being thus forced, as it were, to appear the protector of a woman, for whom he felt no sentiment allied to affection; and the certainty that it would confirm every evil report relative to them, and convey the most injurious impressions to the mind of Emily's friend, Mademoiselle de Bethune, increased his discontent.

Lady Walmer perceived all that was passing in his mind; but vanity and selfishness silenced female delicacy and pride, and induced her to affect not to have observed his coldness.

Arrived at the hotel, she addressed Arlington as follows, who listened to her with dread, if not with disgust.

" You appeared surprised when you saw me on board the packet; but, if you reflect for a moment on the terrible, the humiliating, position in which you have placed me, you must

admit, that having lost all claim to the protection of my husband or relations, I must now seek it from you, and on you alone I must also rely for comfort and consolation. Do not interrupt me, as I see you wish to do, by telling me, that it was *I*, and not *you*, that led to this catastrophe, by inviting you to the interview which terminated so fatally. This defence however is but a mere sophistry; for, you must admit, I should never have sought that interview had you not, by a series of attentions and protestations, excited in my breast a passion to which it had before been a stranger. It is true, you fled from me, but you told me, it was the *excess* of your attachment that led you to make this sacrifice to my peace. Your prudence came too late, for my affections were irrecoverably your's, but they were not yielded unsought; and all the fearful results that have followed are to be attributed solely to your inconstancy, and my too great devotion. Judging of your heart by my own, I thought that your's could not fail to return to its allegiance, the moment we met, and that you should be assured of my undiminished attachment; indeed, your conduct, up to the last fatal evening at Lord Vavasour's, confirmed me in this illusion. Through my infatuated affection for you, I have forfeited my place in society, my home, my friends, and all that I most valued; and now, you would barbarously desert the woman you have ruined, and deprived of all natural and legitimate protection."

A violent burst of tears interrupted the speaker; and Arlington, actuated by pity and remorse, endeavoured to mitigate her affliction.

Her reproaches,—her anger,—he might have borne; but her tears, and unprotected situation, appealed too strongly to his generous nature to be resisted.

To the few words of attempted consolation, which he tried to utter, she replied, by saying, "it now only remains for you to tell me, that you love and that you are engaged to wed another; but, remember, that no vows which you may have sworn to her, can be stronger than those which you plighted to me a few short months ago, and which I, trusting in your honour, foolishly, fatally, believed. Has this new object of your love sacrificed for you, station, reputation, home, and friends? Is she cast on the world, a dishonoured, desolate woman? No! Surrounded by friends, and supported by an approving conscience, she will soon forget you, while I,"—and here, another passionate burst of tears interrupted Lady Walmer, and achieved the conquest of the pity, though not the love, of

Arlington; for this last, even at that moment, he felt was for ever fixed on Emily.

The tears,—the agitation of Lady Walmer,—the picture she had drawn of her own situation,—overcame all his better resolutions: and he pledged himself to protect her: but he shuddered while he made the vow, for a presentiment told him that he was sealing his own misery and ruin.

A woman, who possessed one spark of generosity, would never have accepted this forced sacrifice; and a woman, who had the least particle of delicacy, would never have exacted it; but, unhappily for him, he had found a woman, whose worldliness of mind had conquered not only virtue, but generosity and all feminine feeling, and who only thought of repairing, as well as she could, the mischief she had entailed on herself.

She anticipated the almost certainty of Lord Walmer's seeking a divorce, and felt that her only chance of obtaining anything like a position in society must be by becoming the wife of Arlington.

To accomplish this point, there was nothing she would not do; and, though she saw but too plainly that all her power over his heart was at an end, she was content to owe to pity that which she could no longer hope from love: and now, that his word was pledged to protect her, she felt certain of the rest.

Arlington told her, that he was going to his father, at Boulogne, "and you would not, surely," said he (in a tone that would have spoken reproaches to any other heart than her's), "follow me to his sick bed?"

"No! certainly;" said Lady Walmer, "I will remain here, until I hear from you, as I count on *your honour* for joining me, or letting me go to you, the moment your father is well enough to dispense with your attendance."

Arlington set out immediately for Boulogne, and no one that saw his parting with Lady Walmer, would have believed that he had just pledged himself to her for life, much less that a few months before, he was, or thought he was, desperately in love with her. But love cannot exist without esteem; the passion that assumes its semblance, and imposes on its votaries, no more resembles the true feeling, than vice resembles virtue.

He pursued his route to Boulogne, with feelings of indescribable anguish; he tried not to think of Emily, now that he had for ever lost her, but she rose up continually to memory, in all her purity and beauty, and he almost cursed himself for having consented to the sacrifice Lady Walmer had demanded.

His anxiety about his father, could alone divert his thoughts from the fair object that had so uninterruptedly occupied them for the last three months; and, as he drew near Boulogne, a thousand appehensions filled his mind.

He felt many a pang at the idea of what his father would think, when he came to know that the marriage, which he had anticipated with such delight, was now broken off for ever, and by a liaison with a married woman; a circumstance in itself alone calculated to grieve and shock any parent, but especially a man of such highly moral and religious sentiments as the Marquis of Heatherfield.

All this affectionate relative's tenderness, kindness and indulgence recurred to his mind at that moment,—and *how* was he about to repay him?

Bitter was the pang which his heart sustained, when he reflected that Emily and his father, the two persons he had most loved, and who had most loved him, would both be rendered wretched by his conduct; which had been solely the result of his own folly, and of the neglect of the principles instilled into him by his parent, in seeking to illume a guilty passion in the breast of a married woman.

Who has ever strayed from the paths of virtue, without feeling a remorse, that if it atones not for, at least avenges the sin? We should be lenient in our strictures on such sinners, because their own consciences must have whispered more bitter reproaches than we could utter, or else they are too insensible for our's to reach them.

Arlington found, on arriving at the inn, that his father had fallen into a slumber half an hour before, and still slept; but the two physicians told him to prepare himself for the worst, as a few hours must terminate the existence of the marquis.

"Is there no remedy that might prolong his life for even a few weeks?" asked the affectionate son, his heart lacerated at the thought of so soon losing his father. But the doctors explained to him that all remedies were vain; and he seated himself by the side of the bed, to watch, with all the intensity of affection, the troubled slumber of the dying man.

There lay, pale and attenuated, that noble countenance, which had never looked at him in anger; the high and intellectual forehead, nearly as colourless as the few silver locks that shaded it, and the mouth, where smiles had so often greeted him, now drawn into an expression of bodily pain.

The pale lips moved, and inarticulate sounds escaped them, in which the words "My son," were uttered, and in a few minutes after, he awoke, and Arlington concealed himself behind the curtain, that his father might be prepared for his arrival.

The meeting was most touching, and his son felt nearly overpowered, when the dying man, pressing his hand within his, told him that he felt he had but a few hours to live.

"But they are peaceful hours, my dear child," said he, "for I have, I trust in the Almighty, prepared for them as well as our too frail natures will allow a sinful man to do. I die happy in the thought that you will soon be united to an amiable and virtuous woman, who possesses your affections; and that you will be saved from the snares and temptations to which you have hitherto been exposed. I have trembled for you, my dear Arlington, when I have heard of your paying attention to married women; but, thank God, that is now all over, and I have cause to be proud of, and satisfied with, my son. I should have liked to have seen you married, but the will of God be done! the desired event will be only postponed for a few months, and I shall die in the conviction that you will be happy."

What were Arlington's feelings at hearing this most unmerited congratulation? Every word of affection and confidence spoke reproaches to his soul; and when he reflected that death alone could save his father from the bitter knowledge of his altered position, he shuddered at the alternative of either desiring that event, or, if his life should be prolonged, of forfeiting for ever his esteem and affection. Every crime begets others, neither foreseen or to be avoided; and they who violate *one* duty, find themselves placed in opposition to many others.

When his father again fell into a slumber, Arlington left his chamber, and having entered a salon, with the intention of writing to Desbrow, an English newspaper caught his eye, and, almost unconsciously, he ran over its columns.

An article, headed "Extraordinary *Esclandre* in High Life!" attracted his attention, and he had only read a few lines, when he found an exaggerated account of his own liaison, and its consequences, detailed, with the additional information, that the injured husband was seeking legal redress, and that the Lady W.—the initials only of the names of the parties having been given—had fled to the Continent with Lord A. "What makes the affair still more remarkable (the journal proceeded

to state) is, that the gallant gay Lothario was on the point of marriage with the beautiful and accomplished daughter of Lord V. beneath whose roof the detection of his guilty attachment to Lady W. took place."

Arlington felt the blush of shame mount to his very temples, at this public exposure of his name and supposed crime; the notoriety thus given to it, binding him still more to the unfortunate sharer in it to whom he every hour felt a stronger repugnance—a repugnance which, unknowing her real character, he blamed himself for feeling, now that she was thrown so wholly on his protection. Lord Vavasour—Emily!—what would they think? There was madness in the reflection; and his brain burned, and his pulse beat with agony as he thought of them. If his father had seen this paragraph! "But, God be thanked!" ejaculated Arlington, "he has been spared this blow, and will die in happy ignorance of my folly—my worse than folly."

He put the newspaper into the fire, that none of the attendants of his father should see it, and wrote a long letter to Desbrow, in which he detailed to him the whole state of his position, with his determination to expiate the injury he had unwillingly committed towards Lady Walmer, by making the sacrifice she had demanded, of devoting himself to her for the rest of his life—"a life," wrote Arlington, "which must be henceforth wretched, as my whole heart and soul are Emily's, and the sentiment I feel towards the unfortunate woman I have ruined, approaches much nearer to dislike than affection. The purity, the strong moral principles of Emily, have created an attachment in my breast, that never can be effaced; and yet, such is my fate, that, while worshipping her good qualities, I am forced to pursue a line of conduct so totally opposed to them, that I must not only forfeit her affection, but lose for ever her esteem. The lover who flies with the adored object whom he has plunged in guilt, must have many a bitter moment, which not all the blandishments of passion can sooth; judge, then, of the misery of him who flies *from* the woman he adores and respects, to live with one—but, no! I will not finish the cruel sentence; too well will your mind supply the harsh words that pity for Lady Walmer precludes me from writing."

He had only despatched his letter to Desbrow, when a courier arrived with a packet from Lady Walmer, containing a letter filled with lamentations on his absence, and sending him a newspaper, in which was the statement that he had read.

"You see," wrote Lady W. "our position is now publicly known; and, consequently, your protection is become more than ever necessary to me. If your father is not very ill, could you not come here, though but for a day or two: or let me join you in Boulogne, where I could remain incognita."

Disgust was the predominant feeling in Arlington's mind, as he perused her unfeminine and indelicate letter; the gross selfishness of it, the want of pride and dignity, with which she forced her claims on his protection, formed such an odious contrast to the lovely and pure-minded Emily, the modest and delicate proofs of whose preference for him had so often recurred to his recollection, that he threw the letter and newspaper together into the flames; and it was not without a violent effort that he so far conquered his disgust as to write a few lines to Lady Walmer, saying, that he could not leave his father for an hour, and exhorted her not to come to Boulogne.

Two or three days passed; each finding the Marquis of Heatherfield still more exhausted, and making it more evident that he was rapidly approaching that "bourne whence no traveller returns." Arlington never left him; and lavished those attentions that affection only can bestow, to smooth the bed of death.

Lady Walmer continued to write to him almost daily, expressing her impatience at their continued separation; and complaining that she was become an object of curiosity to all the persons arriving from England, which rendered his presence still more desirable.

Every expression of impatience struck Arlington as an indication of her desire for the death of the father, whose life he would willingly have sacrificed his own to prolong; and this added to his repugnance to her. He destroyed her letters the moment he had read them; and he felt as if it were a profanation of the dying bed, to receive, while in attendance on it, the demonstrations of a guilty passion.

Lord Heatherfield spoke continually of Emily, called her his dear daughter, gave the most affectionate messages for her to his son, and delivered to him the valuable gifts he had purchased at Paris, as wedding presents for her, little imagining that he was directing daggers to the heart of Arlington. In his dying blessing he joined their names, and having thanked his dear son for having made his last moments happy, resigned his soul to his Creator, with the humble confidence of a true Christian.

Though Arlington had been for some days prepared to lose him, he could not witness his dissolution without bitter and profound regret; and, as he contemplated the venerable head which had so nobly merited the coronet of his ancestors, and never even imagined an action unworthy of it, or them, he shrank back from the reflection of how differently *he* should support its honours, when, in defiance of every moral and religious precept, he should be the companion of an adultress, an exile from his country; or, if he remained in England, bearing the brand of reprobation on his brow, and setting the worst example to those whom his high station, and great wealth, made dependent on him.

The bed of death is always a scene to awaken salutary reflections, even in the most hardened. Who can behold, without deep emotion, the pale and inanimate features where life lately shone, and thought manifested itself, now cold and rigid as marble, alike insensible to our regret or indifference? There are the eyes that loved to gaze on us, but which shall look on us no more, now sealed by death; the lips that were wont to smile at our approach, or to greet us with words of affection, now closed for ever; and the hand that often grasped our own with friendship's warmth, now cold and helpless, having "forgot its cunning." Where is the spirit that animated the senseless clay before us?—that clay which resembles so much, yet, alas! is so fearfully unlike, what we loved. Questions of deep import, rise from the soul to the lips, when gazing on the corse of one dear to us,—questions, that death only can solve; and dreadful would be our feelings under such trials, did not religion hold forth the blessed hope of "another and a better world," where we shall meet those who have preceded us to the grave, and whose departure has caused us so many tears.

Can all the boasted power of reason and philosophy offer a balm like religion under such afflictions? Ask the mourner, and he will tell you, that the hope of a reunion hereafter alone consoles him; for reason, without this blessed hope, could only enable him to see the extent of his loss, and philosophy could but teach him to support it with patience. It is religion, the blessed compact between God and man, which points to another, and a better world, and is the only anchor on which hope can rest when sorrow assails it. They who have not mourned over the bed of death, where lay the remains of the object dearest to them on earth, cannot feel with what a yearning, the heart of the wretched survivor turns from this life to the life to come.

As it is only in sickness that we feel the value of medicine, so is it only in sorrow, when all earthly hope fails, that the soul turns to religion for support and consolation.

CHAPTER XIX.

"Pride and poverty are the two worst companions that can meet. They live in a state of continual warfare, and the sacrifice they make to each other, like those made by enemies to establish a hollow truce, only serve to increase their discord."

We left Desbrow in London, anxiously expecting the explanation of his friend, but his suspense was of short duration; for, ere three days had elapsed, the newspapers announced the confirmation of his worst fears, and explained the presence of Lady Walmer and Arlington on board the packet, by stating that they had eloped to the Continent together.

The letter of Arlington, which reached Desbrow in due time, convinced him, that his friend was more unfortunate than guilty in this unhappy entanglement, and excited his warmest sympathy and pity. He was too well aware of the predominant failing in Arlington's character, which was a yielding weakness of nature, and infirmity of purpose, that made him the slave to the passions of others, rather than to his own, not to feel the inutility of urging him to separate from Lady Walmer; and now, that a false principle of honour led him to sacrifice himself to this unworthy woman, Desbrow knew it would be unavailing to counsel him.

Like all weak people, Arlington could be obstinate when he imagined he was performing a duty; though had he possessed a less share of weakness, he must have quickly perceived that his conduct in the present instance was far from deserving this denomination, for, in reality, it was equally opposed to reason and to virtue. But they who live much in the great world are but too apt to adopt its artificial codes, which are so often the very antipodes of those of morality and religion, that the practice of both is utterly incompatible.

Desbrow could therefore only lament the fate of his friend, without the power of extricating him; as he knew that the fear

of the world's dread laugh, or sneer, had more influence over the mind of that friend, than all the precepts which morality and religion could utter. He wrote a kind letter to Arlington, and having engaged Lord Ayrshire to accompany him to Desbrow Hall, they left London together, cheered by letters from Cecile, stating her safe arrival in the Faubourg St. Germain.

We shall leave Lord Ayrshire and Desbrow leading a rational life in the country, planning improvements in the house and park of the latter, and Desbrow munificently dispensing a portion of his vast wealth in ameliorating the condition of the poor in his neighbourhood. Schools were founded, charitable institutions were endowed, and employment given to all who were willing to work.

Arranging the suite of apartments intended for Cecile, became the favourite task of Desbrow: all that a refined taste, joined to a devoted attachment, could invent, was lavished here; and Lord Ayrshire, in consequence of his more intimate knowledge of the habits of Mademoiselle de Bethune, was continually consulted by her anxious lover, with respect to the various alterations. The preparations made to receive a bride in the mansion that is to be her home, by the enamoured lover, are always rich, if not tasteful, in proportion to the degree of affection of him who plans them; Desbrow's was manifested by the execution of all that elegance and comfort could suggest: and as the work advanced, he enjoyed many anticipations of happiness, at the idea of the gratification Cecile would experience, when she came to take possession of the Hall as its mistress.

While the future was thus being arranged for her, the *present* offered anything but a cheering appearance, and it required all the gay visions of hope, which pointed to England and Desbrow, to enable her to support with patience her abode at Paris.

The Hotel de Bethune, in the Rue de Varennes, Faubourg St. Germain, is one of the most vast in Paris; situated *entre cour et jardin*, it presents a splendid façade, and the extent of its numerous suites of apartments, with the painted ceilings, and gilt cornices and architraves, remind the beholder of the former grandeur of the proprietors of this palace. But, alas! time, and revolutionary violence, had touched the pile externally and internally, with ungentle hands; and if enough ornament remains to remind the gazer of past wealth and grandeur, the dilapidations, which on every side meet the eye, bear witness of present poverty.

Cecile sighed as she contrasted this gloomy residence of fallen greatness, with the orderly and comfortable mansions of her dear adopted country; and when her father called on her to admire the vast extent of the rooms, and the carving and gilding which decorated them, remarking how superior they were to the small houses and *mesquin* ornaments of the *petits salons* in England, she listened in silence to his praises of France and all that was French, heartily wishing herself back in the country to which he was so little inclined to do justice.

The pride and the finances of the Comte de Bethune were little in accord with each other; while the first flourished with a luxuriance worthy of the feudal times, the second hardly enabled him to occupy one wing of the hotel of his ancestors, and he preferred having the rest of the vast mansion empty, and falling daily to decay, to letting a portion of it to any of the many respectable persons, who proposed to become its tenants.

As the old Swiss porter threw back the *porte cochère*, to give them entrance, and removed his *bonnet de coton*, with an air in which curiosity mingled with respect, Cecile could almost fancy she was entering some ruined *château à la Radcliffe*, and as the wheels rattled over the pavement, overgrown with grass and herbs, she felt almost like a prisoner, about to enter his dungeon. Having ascended the peristyle, over the massive door of which the arms of De Bethune shone in all the splendour of blazonry, being the only mark of reparation visible to the eye, they passed through the *salle d'entrée*, the tessellated marble pavement of which returned the sound of their footsteps in hollow reverberations. The domestics came forward to welcome them more cordially, but much less respectfully, than English servants receive their employers, and Cecile was surprised at the familiarity with which they treated her haughty father.

The establishment consisted of a superannuated *maître d'hôtel;* a *femme de charge*, the tremulous movements of whose head and hands bore evidence of the years she had numbered; a slipper-shod damsel, with a silk kerchief, tastefully twisted round her head, who was the aid and *élève* of the *femme de charge;* and a young man, with top-boots, and a tarnished livery, who acted in the double capacity of footman and groom. The cook brought up the rear; he was contemporary of the *maître d'hôtel* and *femme de charge*, and all three seemed nearly coeval with the hotel; his *bonnet de coton* and apron were of a less pure white than could be desired; his *couteau*

was conspicuous at his *ceinture*, and his fingers and nostrils betrayed their frequent contact with snuff, in so evident a manner, as to be no less disgusting to the palates of those who might be condemned to partake of his *plats*, than injurious to his own.

Madame le Moine examined Cecile through her spectacles, and pronounced her the image of her grandmother, except that her nose was not *retroussé*, her mouth *beaucoup plus petite*, and her eyes *plus grands*, and that she had not *les cheveux dorés* of madame la comtesse!

The comte listened with complacency, while Cecile at that moment contemplated the portrait of her grandmother, as pointed out by Le Moine, and observing the red hair, upturned nose, large mouth, and squinting eyes, which rendered it an extraordinary specimen of ugliness, was tempted to laugh at the compliment.

The ante-room was graced with a large stove, which served the double capacity of table and cupboard; on it were placed sundry brushes, a cork-screw, some cigars, and a large lump of bees' wax, which the *frotteur* had left there, and which the heat had sent in streams over the brushes, &c. An old lame parrot, who screamed most loudly from his cage, and a few straight-backed chairs, completed the *ensemble* of this chamber of all works, which led to the grand suite of apartments. The salons, with their vast and dingy mirrors, which might be said to give only sombre reflections; the faded velvet, and damask hangings of the walls, the discoloured girandoles and lustres, the carved gilt sofas and fauteuils, and the cumbrous screens, formed a dreary picture, in which the sylph-like form of the beautiful Cecile seemed to pass like a sunbeam through the grate of a prison, rendering the gloom of all around still more visible.

"Ah, *Dieu merci!* I am once more *chez moi*," exclaimed the Comte de Bethune, as throwing himself into a large bergère, he looked complacently around him; a cloud of dust arose from the long unbrushed cushions of the bergère that nearly enveloped him, but which interrupted not his self-congratulations. "I can now breathe freely in these spacious and lofty salons, and am not half suffocated by the smell of that abominable coal, which the English seem to like so much."

While commenting on the coals, a large damp trunk of a tree was smouldering on the bronze dogs, in the open chimney, sending forth more smoke than heat, and emitting an odour that Cecile would gladly have exchanged for the worst

coal that England could produce, while the smoke brought tears to her eyes.

"One really never knows the value of this country," continued the comte, "until one has been out of it, and France never appeared so delightful to me, as now that I compare its *agrémens* with those of England."

A suppressed sigh from Cecile was the only answer; and after reposing himself for a few minutes in the bergère, in which he had intrenched himself, and from which he rose covered with the accumulated dust of months, the comte conducted his daughter to her *chambre à coucher*.

The faded splendour of this apartment was in perfect keeping with the salons; pale blue velvet lined the panels, bearing scarcely a vestige of their original celestial hue, and the mouldings which incased them, representing groups of Cupids sporting among flowers, were nearly black, instead of wearing their once bright golden lustre. The lofty mirrors, from which much of the quicksilver had retreated, showed a thousand fantastic figures; and the high canopied bed, crowned with its coronet and plumes, now nearly black, from the accumulation of damp and dust, bore striking proofs of the power of time and neglect.

This chamber, which, like all the others occupied by the comte, opened on a marble terrace, that descended to what had once been a garden, but which now presented a vast wilderness of decayed trees, stunted shrubs, and flowers running wild, with scattered patches of vegetables, cultivated by the porter to amuse his leisure hours, and improve his *pot au feu*.

The look of desolation and discomfort which her chamber presented, struck a chill to the feelings of Cecile; and when Madame le Moine told her, that *she* was to have the honour of assisting at her toilette, Cecile thought, with a sigh of regret, of the neat bed-rooms and comfortable dressing-rooms she had hitherto been accustomed to, as well as of the intelligent and active *femme de chambre*, who had waited on her from infancy at Lord Ayrshire's.

Her father told her, that she must appear in an elegant *demi-toilette*, as he should take her to pay one or two visits in the evening: and having left her to prepare for dinner, she despatched the momentous affair of dressing, as quickly as she could, giving as little trouble to her aged assistant as possible, whose hands being left nearly unemployed, her tongue was

more at liberty to enjoy that bavardage in which French servants are so fond of indulging.

She congratulated mademoiselle on the happiness of being at length restored to her native country; pitied her for the many years she had been condemned to live out of it; and rejoiced that *she* had never been doomed to quit her *chère patrie, la belle France*, which not even the terrible Revolution could make her abandon.

The respectful deference of English servants towards their employers, had not prepared Cecile for the familiarity of Madame le Moine, which she received with a cold civility, that sent that old dame to complain to the *maître d'hôtel*, and *cusinier*, that mademoiselle was *une véritable Anglaise*, proud, cold, and formal.

The Comte de Bethune lamented, when his daughter made her appearance, that there had not been time to get her a chapeau from Herbault, and a robe from Victorine, as she was scarcely presentable, he observed, in her *toilette à l'Anglaise*; but he promised to ask Madame la Duchesse de Montcalm to order what was necessary for her, as it was of the utmost importance that she should be *bien mise* to win the suffrages of her Parisian connexions. The importance he attached to her dress, impressed Cecile with, the truth of all she had ever heard, of the *légèreté* and frivolity of most of the individuals of the nation, to which her father belonged; and a smile almost betrayed her thoughts, of which, if he observed it, luckily, a summons to dinner prevented his demanding the cause.

Her father led her to the *salle à manger*, with a gravity and ceremony, which, however it might mark his respect for her, was little calculated to excite either her cordiality or cheerfulness.

This apartment, like the rest of the suite, was vast and lofty; the walls were stuccoed to imitate *jaune antique* marble, and a fountain at each side of the buffet, with large lions' heads, which had now forgotten to pour their accustomed tribute of water, but which still continued, with distended jaws, to grin at the spectators, added to the cold aspect of this nearly deserted banquet-hall. A small table of two covers occupied the centre; and the *maître-d'hôtel*, and *valet de pied*, were ranged in due order.

Unlike the generality of heroines, who are supposed, or stated to be, superior to the infirmities of humanity, Cecile really

felt hungry; and, though certain reminiscences of the cook's propensity to snuff did cross her mind, her appetite compelled her to eat. The *soupe de vermicelle claire*, was guiltless of any taste, save of the tepid water of which it was composed; the *vol-au-vent à la financière* was filled wholly with *crêtes de coq;* and the *friture de poulet*, peeping out from a wilderness of fried parsley, looked so flaccid instead of being crisp, that she could not venture to taste it. The *fricandeau à l'oseille* was equally untempting; and Cecile saw the first course, to which her father did ample justice, disappear, leaving her appetite unsatisfied.

The second service presented three roasted thrushes, enveloped in covers of bacon, and surrounded by a forest of watercresses; *cardons à la moëlle de bœuf*, half cold, and *des œufs à la neige*, resembling soap-suds much more than snow, with *omelettes sucrées*, and *petits pains à la duchesse*.

To eat a thrush, Cecile felt would be impossible, as they, of all the tuneful, feathered choir, were her especial favourites, from the tameness with which they hopped near the window of her dear home, at Lord Ayrshire's. Gladly would our poor heroine have hailed the appearance of a plain cutlet of mutton, a wing of a chicken, boiled or roast, or, in short, of any simple viand, to allay the pangs of hunger which really assailed her; but the *plats* before her bore such evident marks of having occupied the fingers of the old *artiste de cuisine*, that she turned with loathing from them; and while eating a morsel of bread, was forced to listen to the praises, which her father lavished on each dish, and his self-congratulations at having escaped from *la cuisine Anglaise*. Bechamel, his cook, he pronounced to be *un véritable artiste de l'ancien régime*, of which so few (and, judging from this specimen, Cecile thought, luckily) remain; for the comte declared, that the influx of the English, Russians, and Germans, had destroyed the modern *cuisine* in France, by introducing their barbarous national dishes and strong sauces.

on the morning of her departure from here, she found her not in her chamber, and on going to the corridor, saw her slip into Lord Arlington's room, where she remained only a minute; that, curious to know why she went there, the maid slid into the room on tiptoes, and found it empty, and a letter, in her lady's writing, addressed to Lord Arlington, on the table, of which it was evident her lady herself had been the bearer. Lord Walmer left this house without seeing his wife, though they were, apparently, on the best terms when they wished us good-night; so it's quite clear, that some very improper detection must have taken place, and so Mrs. Preston informed me the next day, but I knew it was useless to tell you, as you were so determined to think well of your favourite, Lord Arlington."

"You were right, my dear," replied Lord Vavasour; "as, however true the intelligence might be, the source from which it emanated—the gossip of two ladies' maids—rendered it unfit for my ears, as well as for yours, and proves what I have often told you, that Mrs. Preston is really a most unsafe and gossipping woman, too little delicate as to the means of procuring information, and too much given to seek that which is the most unprofitable,—scandal and family secrets."

Lord Vavasour turned over and over again in his mind, the best mode of breaking the bad news he had to communicate to Emily. He sent for her to the library, and having seated her by his side, took her hand affectionately within his, and thus addressed her.

"When I sanctioned your union with Lord Arlington, my dear child, I believed him to be as faultless in morals, as he is agreeable and amiable in manners. I have been deceived, and he is no longer worthy of your affection, or of your hand. The avowal of his unworthiness comes from himself; from another, I should have refused to credit it; but there is now no room for doubt, and you, my dear Emily, must think of him no more, except as one who, however entitled to our pity, can no longer claim our respect."

"But is there no possibility, my father, that Lord Arlington may not be able to justify what now, perhaps, appears so much against him? No! he cannot surely be such a hypocrite, as to have seemed to love and reverence virtue and honour, while he was violating either!"

The varying colour of her cheek, the trembling movement of her lips, and the eager glance with which she regarded her

father, convinced him of the fearful anxiety with which she awaited his answer to this question; and his heart felt for her's, as he told her there was no hope.

"And can I then no longer esteem him?" exclaimed the agitated girl; "all else I could have borne;" and tears, bitter tears, chased each other in torrents from her eyes.

Lord Vavasour, after a few moments' reflection, and witnessing the vain efforts of his daughter, to suppress the anguish that nearly overpowered her, suddenly formed the resolution of acquainting her with the real state of Arlington's feelings and position, to the details of which she listened with breathless anxiety.

Now was revealed to her the cause of his perturbation, the morning of their rencontre in the pleasure-grounds; his embarrassment in the presence of Lady Walmer;—all stood disclosed, and pity, warm, tender pity, for Arlington, usurped the place of every other feeling in her breast.

"Oh, do not be angry with him, my dear father!" said Emily; "see you not that he has erred from misjudged sentiments of honour? Henceforth, let us think of him with kindness and pity, for he can now never be aught to us; but let me thank you, for giving me the consolation of knowing that the man I considered as my future husband, was not a hypocrite; and that, though erring, deeply erring, he is more entitled to our pity than to blame."

Emily dried the tears that, in spite of all her good resolutions, still continued to gush from her eyes; and, trying to call up a faint smile, though the attempt proved a failure, she kissed her father's cheek, and sought the sanctuary of her chamber, there to weep over, not her own cruel disappointment, but the misery, which her heart and her reason equally told her, was reserved for him she had so fondly loved.

The assurance that Arlington still cherished her image in his breast, excited her pity for him still more, though it soothed her feelings; for the youthful and pure mind turns with affright and disgust from the first proofs of deception that are forced on its inexperience. He had so often strengthened her principles of morality, by the expression of his own, that she dared not contemplate the possibility of his having been practising on her innocence, by a display of virtues foreign to his character; and it was a relief to her to know, that he had not sought guilt, though he was likely to pay its bitter penalty.

After an hour devoted to tears, which eased her oppressed heart, she sought for consolation where alone it can be found,

in supplication to the Deity; who, knowing the weakness of his creatures, can yield them a pardon and pity, that their equally erring fellow mortals seldom can accord. When she arose from her knees, her feelings were calmed, and she firmly resolved that he who was henceforth to be the companion of the wife of another, should never be thought of by her, save as a friend once loved, but for ever lost.

The destiny of woman is to suffer; and she who escapes sorrow, may be said to be exempt from the penalties which fall to the lot of her sex. But to suffer in silence, hiding the barbed arrow in their breasts, is reserved for those women only, whose reasoning powers are strengthened by religion, and whose tenderness of heart is fortified by courage and resignation.

Emily, with the simplicity of a child, possessed all the high character of an intellectual woman. She remembered that she had duties to perform towards her parents, which no selfish indulgence of her own regrets ought to prevent her fulfilling; and she exerted every faculty to appear cheerful and contented in their presence, though, in the solitude of her chamber, unbidden thoughts of one whom she ought to forget would but too often intrude, fading her cheek, and dimming the lustre of her eye.

CHAPTER XXI.

"Such is man's unhappy condition, that though the weakness of the heart has a prevailing power over the strength of the head, yet the strength of the head has but small force against the weakness of the heart."

Arlington, or Heatherfield, as we must now call him, with a sorrowful heart prepared to accompany the last remains of his father to England, that he might see them laid in the tomb of his ancestors. He wrote a few lines to Lady Walmer, stating his intention, and repeating that, this last duty towards his parent performed, he would return to her.

His journey was a melancholy one; and the reflections it occasioned in his mind, made him turn with still increased disgust from the prospect of a seclusion with her who was to be henceforth his companion.

From the moment that he reached the last fifty miles of the

route to Heatherfield, the symptoms of respectful sympathy of the inhabitants of each town and village became more marked. The late Marquis of Heatherfield was known and beloved by all, and when the funeral procession arrived at the town of Heatherfield, the property of the House of Arlington, some hundreds of the tenantry, on horseback, and in mourning, came forward to join it. The children of the charity schools, and the poor supported by the late lord's bounty, met the cavalcade near the church; and grief marked the demeanour of all, from the old and infirm, whom his beneficence had fed, to the young and helpless, to whom he extended the blessings of education.

There is none of our religious ceremonies so imposing as the funeral service,—that last duty of the living to the dead,—and never was it more impressively gone through, than on this occasion. The minister who read it had, for thirty years, been the constant witness and agent of the judicious benevolence of *him* he was now consigning to the grave; and they who stood around it, had all, in a greater or less degree, experienced his munificence." The deep grief of Lord Heatherfield excited their affection and sympathy; as they attributed wholly to the loss of his father, that which had another and, perhaps, even more poignant source.

When the clergyman came to the passage "Man that is born of woman, hath but a short time and is full of misery; he cometh up, and is cut down like a flower; he fleeth, as it were a shadow, and never continueth in one stay;" Arlington felt that this true picture of the brevity of human life was consolatory to his wounded feelings; for now, that the future offered him nothing but an existence of exile and shame, he had a morbid gratification in contemplating the probability of its short duration.

But when the earth was thrown on the coffin, every thought connected with self was banished from his mind; and he seemed again to feel the pressure of his father's hand, and to hear his last blessing, as the body slowly descended into the vault, and in a few minutes receded from his sight. Casting his tearful eyes to take a last look at it, he discerned the vacant place which his own coffin would occupy, and the bitter thought rushed upon his mind,—"Shall *I* be followed to the grave by a mourning son, and troops of lamenting friends? Ah, no! all I can hope for, is pity; for my weakness and folly have deprived me of affection and respect."

The worthy Dean Vandeleur joined him in the church-yard,

and there was a gravity and coldness visible, even through the regret that he displayed for the loss of his patron and friend, as he saluted the new proprietor of Heatherfield. Conscience, that ever-wakeful remembrancer, whispered to Heatherfield the cause of this coldness, from one who had loved him from his birth; the statements in the newspapers had made known his position, without its extenuating points; and he felt the blush of shame mount to his temples, as he thought, that while paying the last duties to his father, he was looked on as an adulterer. The deep grief depicted on the countenance and manner of Lord Heatherfield, touched the chord of sympathy in the heart of the excellent Dean Vandeleur, who relaxed from his coldness, and while accompanying Heatherfield to his carriage, announced his intention of calling on him the following day.

The entry of Lord Heatherfield into his paternal home, was marked by the silence and tears of his dependants. They too had heard of his elopement, and while deeply sorrowing for the excellent master they had lost, they had to deplore the unworthiness of his successor. The old grey-headed servants who met him in the hall, could not utter a welcome, and he fancied their hoary locks reproached him for bringing sin and scandal to the home of his fathers. He mentally vowed that she who had caused his fall from respectability, should never come to Heatherfield, or occupy the place of his virtuous mother; and this resolution seemed to soothe his wounded feelings.

When Heatherfield rose in the morning and opened his windows, the beauty of the landscape attracted his admiration; the undulations of the ground of the park, the groups of trees, and the clear and rapid river that reflected them, all claimed his pleased attention. "How Emily would have liked this place!" was the involuntary thought that suggested itself; and then came a waking dream of the happiness he was so near enjoying, of conducting her to Heatherfield as its happy mistress, blessed, and blessing all his numerous dependants.

For a few minutes he forgot the misery of his altered position, in the picture his imagination had created; but soon returned his recollection of the fearful reality, and he directed his glance towards the steeple of the church,—seen through the trees,—where he had placed the remains of his father the night before, that by being reminded of death, he might bear with less bitterness the life his own folly had robbed of every charm.

They must have suffered deeply who turn to the grave for consolation: a few weeks ago, Heatherfield would have shrunk from such a contemplation, for then life offered him a brilliant

and unclouded prospect; but now, though he had unbounded wealth, high station, ancient descent, with youth and health, yet all were insufficient to bestow one hour of happiness: and to this state he had reduced himself by his own misconduct!

While at his solitary breakfast, he looked over the newspapers, and his own name in large characters, heading a leading article, drew his attention. He found it to be an account of his arrival at Dover, with the funeral *cortége* of the late lamented Marquis, whose sudden dissolution, it was added, had been caused by the shock occasioned by a late elopement in high life. The paper dropped from his hand, and anger and indignation filled his mind; but a few minutes reflection taught him to conquer those feelings, as he considered that all, who by one false step lay themselves open to censure, must expect to be the continual objects of its lash, even when they no longer merit it; and though, happily for him, the statement was untrue, it might have been but too well-founded had his father known his real position; as who could tell what *might* have been the fatal effects on an exhausted frame like his, had the truth *been* disclosed to him. Heatherfield thanked Providence again and again, that this additional misery was spared him, and that his lamented father died in happy ignorance of his enthralment.

The Will of the late Marquis of Heatherfield was read the day after his interment, in the presence of Dean Vandeleur, the solicitor from London, and the agent of the estates. The landed property was strictly entailed on the male heir, but the funded and personal fortune, which was very large, was, with the exception of a few legacies to friends, and provisions for all his servants, bequeathed to his son. A codicil had been added three days before his death, in which the worthy old peer stated, that to signalize his gratification at the marriage of his dear son Charles John Augustus, Lord Arlington, was on the eve of contracting with the Lady Emily Vavasour, he bequeathed to her all the jewels that were not heir-looms in the family, and he declared it to be his desire that the marriage between the said Charles John Augustus, Lord Arlington, and the said Lady Emily Vavasour, be solemnized in three months after his decease, and he prayed God to bless both his children.

When this codicil was read aloud, Lord Heatherfield felt the blood rush to his face, as it receded quickly from his heart. A sense of deep gratification at his father's high sense of the merit of Emily, was the first feeling; but then came the consciousness that he had lost her for ever, and shame that his position with

regard to her should be thus exposed to those present at the perusal of the Will. The good Dean looked at him with wonder, and the solicitor and agent stole glances of astonishment at each other, of which the consciousness of his own painful situation rendered Heatherfield still more observant.

When left alone with Dean Vandeleur, he requested that worthy divine to continue to be the dispenser of all the charities hitherto supported by the late lord.

"I shall be away from England for some time," said Arlington; "and I wish my absence to be as little felt as possible by my tenants and the poor, so I beg that you will not be sparing of my purse; as an absentee owes at least this compensation to those who depend on him, if circumstances compel him to live in another country."

Such was the effect produced on Dean Vandeleur's mind, by his interview with Lord Heatherfield, that on talking it over with his wife, he expressed his conviction, that whatever might be the guilt of that nobleman, he still retained a moral sensitiveness and benevolence incompatible with a vicious mind.

"Did I not say, my dear Dean," replied the good-natured wife, "that you judged him too severely: I have loved him from his childhood, and though I do not like to speak against my sex, yet I must say that I am sure the wicked woman who seduced him, is more to be blamed than he."

"How strange is it," said the Dean, "that all you women are more given to throw censure on your own sex than on ours; there is no *esprit de sexe* amongst you."

"I deny it," said the kind-hearted Mrs. Vandeleur; "but in this instance, knowing Lord Heatherfield from his boyhood, and having witnessed a thousand instances of his goodness of heart, I must naturally be more inclined to impute blame to the lady, whom I do not know, than to him. Besides, in such cases, our sex are more to be blamed than yours; our education, our habits, render such crimes more serious in our eyes, than in yours; and a woman who breaks through the most sacred duties to gratify a guilty passion, becomes a reproach to womanhood, and, as such, is viewed by us all, with more disdain than pity."

"That is what I object to," said the Dean; "I would have you show more pity, and less disdain; and, above all, while you visit an erring woman with such severity, I would not have you receive with kindness the *cause* of her errors."

When Dean Vandeleur left Lord Heatherfield, the latter had a long interview with his steward, to whom he gave in-

structions as to all he wished done in his absence. He then sent for the housekeeper, Mrs. Davenport, who had been his mother's *femme-de-chambre* at his birth, and since the death of her mistress had filled her present situation. This worthy old woman loved her young lord, as she called him, with a sincerity rarely to be met with, in these our modern days, when civilization has weakened the bonds that formerly united master and servant. *Nous avons changé tout cela.* But have we changed it for the better? Our servants are now become bad copies of ourselves; they can perceive with lynx-eyes our vices, and copy them but too faithfully; while our virtues are not so apparent to their perception, and consequently are less followed.

Mrs. Davenport's respectful courtesies, and hopes that his lordship found every thing in good order, being ended, she begged that she might be permitted to resign her situation, and retire to a cottage in the village, which she intended to rent."

"This will be very inconvenient indeed to me, Mrs. Davenport," said Lord Heatherfield; "for, as I may be some years on the Continent, it would have been a great satisfaction to me, to know that you were here."

"Then your lordship is not coming to reside here?" said Mrs. Davenport; "in that case, I certainly can remain."

Then feeling that she had said something improper, she immediately added, blushing deeply while she spoke, "Your lordship being absent from England, I shall have so much less to do, that I can retain my situation until your lordship's return."

Heatherfield felt all that was passing in her mind, and blushed too in presence of this respectable old woman, whose *chagrin*, at the thought of seeing his exemplary mother's place filled by *her*, who was to be the companion of his future years, he could well understand and respect.

When he had made all the necessary arrangements for his absence, Lord Heatherfield wandered from room to room, like an unquiet spirit: each object reminded him of other and happier days; the silence and repose that reigned around, the mementoes of the lately dead, and of his mother, scattered through the apartments they had occupied, invested the place with a sanctity in his eyes; and as he dwelt on their portraits, almost starting into life from the canvass, and beaming with the same benignant looks of affection with which they had been wont to regard him, he felt how they would

have shrunk from him, could they have known the guilty alliance he had pledged himself to form,—an alliance which must ever banish him from the home of his ancestors.

He sought relief from the sadness that overpowered him, by packing up with his own hands the jewels bequeathed to Emily Vavasour by his father. They had all been worn by his mother, and though much less costly than the splendid family jewels, which were heir-looms, and had descended from father to son, for several generations, yet they were highly valuable, and chosen with great taste. A bracelet, containing a fine enamel miniature of the late Lord Heatherfield, was amongst the ornaments; it was painted when that nobleman was about the actual age of his son, and the family resemblance was so striking, that, except for the difference of dress, it might have passed for a portrait of the present lord.

For a moment, Heatherfield, as he gazed on it, was tempted to keep it back; but a feeling he could not well define, induced him to send it with the other ornaments. He looked at each and all, and pressed them to his lips, as he thought they would be touched by Emily, and a vague sense of pleasure at the idea, that these inanimate objects would be a sort of family compact between her and him, soothed his mind.

The casket containing the jewels, and a copy of the Will, was sent to Lord Vavasour, with a letter from Heatherfield, in which he stated his position and feelings, with a frankness and touching truth well calculated to excite the pity and regret of the good-natured man to whom it was addressed; he added, that he was leaving England, probably for ever, and should have embarked ere that letter reached its destination; a statement which he made in the intention of preventing the jewels being returned.

Lord Heatherfield left his home with feelings of bitter regret; never had it appeared so beautiful in his eyes as now, when he was bidding it adieu, perhaps for ever; and he gazed upon its outspreading woods and lawns, as if he was taking a last leave of dear friends.

A few minutes before he quitted Heatherfield, he received a letter, announcing that Lord Walmer had commenced legal proceedings against him, so that he had now all the scandalous publicity of a trial hanging over his head, from which he shrank with almost womanly sensitiveness.

To avoid passing through London, he crossed the country, and late at night was descending the steep hill near to—— where his route was impeded by a crowd collected round a

travelling carriage and stage coach, which had (owing to the darkness of the night, or the inattention of the coachman or postilion) come in violent contact, and the carriage being the lighter of the two, had yielded to the shock, and was upset.

"The gentleman is killed!" vociferated some of the persons around the carriage, while others asserted that he was only stunned, from the violence of the overturning.

Heatherfield jumped out of his chaise, and, attended by his *valet-de-chambre*, approached the carriage of the stranger, to see if he could be of any assistance. He found him supported by his servant, in a state of total insensibility, his face nearly covered by the blood which was gushing from a wound in his head: the agitated domestic urging the crowd around to send off to ——, for a surgeon, or intreating the coachman and guard of the stage-coach, to take his master to ——, while they asserted that the coach was too much injured to proceed, and one of the wheels of the carriage in which was the stranger, having come off,—that could not be used.

Heatherfield proposed to the servant to remove his master into his carriage, and assisted him in the operation, and having bound up the head of the wounded man, to staunch the blood which flowed so profusely, he helped to support him during their rout to ——, having sent on his own servant on one of the post-horses, to order an apartment to be made ready, and a surgeon in attendance. A few faint moans were the only indications of life given by the sufferer. Heatherfield felt his pulse, which was so weak as to be almost imperceptible, and he feared he would expire, before they arrived at ——. The whole affair had been so hurried, that he had not inquired of the servant the name of his master, and the poor man appeared so overcome with alarm, as also from some severe contusions which he had received, that Heatherfield asked him no questions.

Arrived at ——, he assisted in bearing the unfortunate stranger to the chamber prepared for him, where a surgeon and doctor were soon in attendance. Lord Heatherfield's dress and hands were literally drenched with blood, and he started as he beheld his own image in a mirror, when passing through the room; but what was his horror and astonishment, when lights were brought close to the wounded man, and the blood removed from his face, he discovered him to be—Lord Walmer. The surgeon, after a long examination, pronounced that a concussion of the brain had taken place, and that such was the weakness of the patient, from the excessive loss of blood, that a few hours must terminate his sufferings.

To describe Lord Heatherfield's feelings, at seeing stretched before him, on the bed of death, the man whom he had (though unintentionally) injured, would be impossible. Remorse and regret were mingled in his heart, as he looked at the dying sufferer, whose hand had often clasped his in amity, and of whose hospitality he had so often partaken. Had he never known him, this catastrophe might not have occurred:—so thought Heatherfield, as, with the sensitiveness which belongs to remorse, he conjured up all that could still more increase the bitterness of his feelings. He left not the side of Lord Walmer for the whole night, while the medical people tried all means that art could dictate to afford him relief; but all was in vain, for he breathed his last as day dawned, without having once opened his eyes, or given any proof of life, except faint groans, from the moment of the accident which terminated so fatally.

Nearly exhausted by mental agitation and bodily fatigue, Heatherfield left the chamber of death, and threw himself on a bed, where he sank into a heavy slumber, in which the scene that had just occurred, was acted over again in dreams, with all the fantastic horrors that dreams alone can create. Lady Walmer appeared to his excited imagination, her cheeks pale as death, her hair dishevelled, and her eyes glaring, with a poniard in her hand, which she first struck into the bosom of Emily Vavasour, and then drawing forth the reeking weapon, stabbed her husband, whose blood spouted over his murderess and Heatherfield; who awoke shuddering with horror, his brow bedewed with cold perspiration, and sick at heart, as the painful reality of the death of Lord Walmer recurred to his recollection.

The moment of awaking, after the first night of any loss or catastrophe, is always dreadful. The feelings return with renewed poignancy to the evil, forgotten for a few hours in slumber, and the physical force the frame has received from repose, renders the mind more alive to the suffering, which the torpor of exhaustion had previously blunted, though not subdued.

He made many attempts before he could write to Lady Walmer; but at length he stated to her the event that had taken place, which he broke to her as gently as he could. His remorse was too deep to admit of his repressing the expressions it dictated, and bitterly did he accuse himself, for ever having abused the hospitality of Lord Walmer, by addressing vows of love to his wife, who ought to have been sacred in his eyes,

from the confidence with which the husband received and trusted him. How differently did Lord Heatherfield now view his past conduct! A few months before, such is the force of example and evil contact, he would have seen nothing very heinous in it; every young man of fashion of his acquaintance made love to some married woman, and, in most cases, those ladies were the wives of their friends, as it is only in such cases that facilities are afforded for forming such unhallowed attachments. But since Heatherfield had left his London associates, and yielded to the beneficial effects of a pure and virtuous affection, he had learned to think otherwise; and his eyes once opened to the enormity of vice, however it may be gilded over by conventional temporizing, he could never again contemplate it without disgust, or practise it without self-reproach and shame. Still the worldly weakness of being guided by a false principle of honour adhered to him, and to this was he ready to sacrifice not only his own happiness, but that of another, dearer, far dearer to him than self.

CHAPTER XXII.

"Paris! ville de prestige, où le regard est juge, où l'apparence est reine; où la beauté est dans la tournure, la conduite dans les manières, l'esprit dans le bon goût; où les prétentions dénaturent, où l'homme le plus distingué rougit de ses qualités primitives, et s'efforce d'en imiter d'impossibles à son naturel; où la vie est un long combat entre un caractère de naissance qu'on subit et un caractère d'adoption qu'on s'impose; où chacun est en travail d'hypocrisie; où l'esprit léger se fait pédant, où chacun vit des autres avec de la fortune, imite celui qui le copie, et emprunte souvent le costume qu'on lui a volé. Ville de graves folies et d'innocentes faussetés."

Cecile de Bethune attended her father to the Duchesse de Montcalm, where she found assembled a party, chosen purposely to meet her.

Madame la Duchesse's hotel, in the Faubourg St. Germain, was one of the last strongholds of the ancient regime; the fortune of the duchesse enabled her to refurnish it with more than its pristine splendour, uniting all the modern inventions of luxurious comfort, to the rich style of the fourteenth Louis. The walls of her salons displayed the gorgeous tints of Tinto-

retto, Paul Veronese, Moroni, Bonifacio, Bernardo Luini, and, though last, not least, the bright hues of Titian and Gorgioni. Commodes of buhl, lac, and *marquetterie*, covered with vases of ancient *porcelaine de Sèvres*, were scattered through the salons, with tripods of *or moulu*, supporting censers with fragrant odours, which sent forth a perfume through the vast apartments. Mirrors, descending from the ceiling to the ground, with *jardiniers* in front, filled with the rarest flowers, divided the compartments of the rooms, and silken hangings, of the richest materials, carpets of the softest texture and most vivid tints, with fauteuils, and sofas of the most varied forms, finest carving, and most luxurious constructions, completed the *ensemble* of this splendid residence. The servants were well dressed, the anti-rooms clean and well-lighted, the company *bien mise*, and Madame la Duchesse, *aimable* and *prévenante*, though a little too vividly attentive to the personal appearance of her "*charmante cousine*," as she called Cecile.

The Comte de Bethune anticipated the observations which he saw the duchesse was on the point of giving utterance to, by apologizing for the toilette of his daughter.

"We only arrived to-day," said he, "and had not time to send for a *chapeau;* but if Madame la Duchesse will have the kindness to superintend *les emplettes de ma fille*, she will be but too much flattered."

The duchesse raised her glass, and examining Cecile with a *nonchalance* very embarrassing to the object of her scrutiny, elevated her shoulders and eyebrows with a true French ease, and, with a half frown and smile, observed that it was quite dreadful to think, how the barbarous English had disfigured her *petite cousine*. She was quite sure, that when *mise à la française*, she would be charming, for though her *tournure* was *malheureusement anglaise*, her physiognomy was happily French. She called Cecile to her, to examine her still more minutely; and while the timid girl indignantly submitted to be turned around, the duchesse burst into a laugh, rather louder than high-breeding would permit, on discovering that some appendages considered indispensable to a French woman's toilette were omitted, and exclaimed, "*Que les Anglais sont drôles! Quelle idée, imaginez-vous, mesdames;*" turning to half-a-dozen ladies who formed a circle round her,—"*la pauvre petite n'a pas de fausse tournure.*"

"*Est-il possible!*" cried all the ladies at once; "*quel malheur; on n'aurait jamais cru, dans notre siècle, voir un pareil manque de savoir s'habiller.*"

Cecile felt her delicacy and pride equally wounded by this unceremonious treatment; the colour rose to her cheeks, as she caught the eyes of a few of the old *habitués* of the salon fixed on her, and the tears almost escaped from her eyes, as she stood trembling and blushing before her examiners.

"*Eh bien, mesdames,*" exclaimed the duchesse, "to-morrow you will see, *ma petite cousine autre chose*, when all these *tire-bouchon* curls,"—drawing her fingers through the silken ringlets of Cecile,—"have been arranged by Frederick, and crowned by *un joli chapeau* d'Herbault; when this person, laying her hands on the slender waist of the abashed girl, which now looks so *gauche et guindée*, is inclosed in a *corset* de Varon, and a robe de Victorine, she will not be *reconnaissable.* Yes, I predict, that *ma petite cousine* in three months will look as if she had never left Paris."

The duchesse then motioned Cecile to a chair, to which she tottered, rather than walked, feeling that every eye was upon her; and her embarrassment was not decreased by hearing the duchesse observe to the lady next her, "*Regardez, en grâce, Madame, la pauvre petite ne sait pas marcher.*"

The Comte de Bethune approached his *belle cousine*, as he called the duchesse, to thank her for her kindness to Cecile, and that lady having observed the heightened colour of the poor girl, remarked to her father, that *la petite* appeared to have a great deal of *mauvaise honte*, which they must endeavour to conquer, for nothing gave such an idea of being *mal élevé;* a dictum to which the sapient comte assented.

The duchesse then proposed engaging a fencing-master for Cecile, saying it was absolutely necessary, *pour dégourdir* her arms, and for giving her self-confidence; adding, that when she had made some progress *en tirant les armes*, she would engage a dancing-master: "*enfin, mon ami*, continued she, "we must polish this rough diamond, which only requires to be re-set *à la française*, to show its beauty."

Cecile listened to this monologue, with no less astonishment than dismay; and the high tone of madame la duchesse's voice allowed her not to miss a single word of it. Was she, who had been educated with such care, who had received lessons from the best masters England could furnish, and was universally considered not to have shamed her instructors,—was she now to be condemned to commence afresh? Was she who had been presented at the British Court, and shone in the most distinguished of the English aristocratic circles, now considered too awkward to take her place in a French salon, and above

all,—for this last wounded Cecile more than all the rest—was the *élève* of her dear lost friend, Lady Ayrshire,—one of the most accomplished, high-bred, and dignified women that England could boast,—to be treated as an ignorant and unformed girl, whose *gaucherie* and *mauvaise honte* required correction? The *amour-propre* of poor Cecile,—for who is without *amour-propre?*—was deeply wounded; and her mortification gave her an air of timidity and embarrassment, that confirmed in the shallow minds of the persons around her their erroneous impressions relative to her.

Those who had seen Cecile de Bethune in England, forming one of the brightest ornaments of its highest circles, admired and applauded by all; her gracefulness, beauty, and polished manners universally acknowledged, surrounded by admiring acquaintance and cordial friends, would have found it difficult to recognise her in the frightened and agitated girl in the salon of the Duchesse de Montcalm. She felt confounded and humiliated. Had she then been in a vain delusion all the previous portion of her life?—had all the commendations bestowed on her proceeded from flattery? These were the questions she asked herself; for Cecile had yet to learn that what is considered graceful and dignified in rational England, passes for *gaucherie* and stiffness in frivolous France. She blamed herself for not preserving her self-possession, as her sense of good-breeding told her that all the *désagrémens* she had encountered proceeded from the obtuse *brusquerie* of the duchesse, which she ought to have met with dignified coldness. But, at nineteen it is difficult to be dignified with those who have prejudged us to be unformed and awkward, and any assumption of dignity on the part of Cecile would have been totally lost on the persons with whom she was now associated, or mistaken for *mauvaise humeur*.

Manière and *esprit* are the two objects which all French women aim at acquiring. The first, according to their notions, consists in an *air dégagé*, that is to say, a perfect freedom from timidity in their demeanour and movements, and an *aplomb* in all situations, and under every circumstance in which they may happen to be placed. They must be enabled to enact the role of each character they wish to personify; for a Frenchwoman is always acting, her life is a comedy or tragedy, as events occur; but, whichever it may be, it finds her prepared for her part. It is not, that they cannot, and do not feel as others do, but it is that from infancy they are taught to refer their actions and conversation to the effect to be pro-

duced by both on others; the *qu'en dira-t-on?* is always present to their minds, and to be cited as bearing affliction gracefully, and prosperity with bon ton, is as essential in their eyes as to be appropriately dressed for either role, and much more important than the real causes or effects of them. A Frenchwoman is not content with being a good wife and mother,—and there are hundreds in every class who are both,—but she must dramatize the part, to produce a scenic effect. The more homely virtue; and the happiness it never fails to produce, is not sufficient,—she must be applauded,—hence, she is always an actress. Her salon is the theatre where she plays her principal part, and that it may be brilliantly performed, *esprit* is absolutely necessary. All her study is to acquire and display this French essential; for this she dips into metaphysics, skims the froth of political economy, runs over every new production, and, what is more difficult, occasionally listens to the *membres de la Chambre des Pairs et des Députés*, and the *savans* who frequent her *soirées*. She repays herself for this last-mentioned sacrifice by giving her opinions with equal self-confidence on the most knotty point of politics, or abstruse science, as on the last new mode; and has at command a certain jargon and tone of *persiflage*, half-laughing, half-serious, which passes current for wit, and gains for her the flattering distinction of being quoted as having *beaucoup d'esprit*. Every Frenchwoman is *maniérée;* even while a child in the nursery, and when arrived at maturity, it has become so natural to her that it cannot be left off. All who possess not this distinction, are considered *gauches* and *mal élevées:* it was, therefore, no wonder that Cecile, in the circle of the Duchesse de Montcalm, was treated as a young person totally unformed.

We once heard a French lady give the preference to an artificial rose made by Natier (the fashionable artificial flower-maker at Paris), to a natural one of great beauty, plucked in a parterre. She asserted that there was no comparison; the rose of Natier was much more elegant, the petals more delicate, and *la couleur plus tendre;* "*enfin*," as she added, "it is more like my beau ideal of a rose than the one from the garden." This French lady's estimation of the artificial rose, may serve as an example of the opinion of all her sex in France, as to natural and acquired grace, beauty, and manner; and the well-bred Englishwoman, who will not try to *faire de l'esprit et briller dans les salons*, will be sure to be counted as stupid, awkward, and *ennuieuse.*

This innate love of display, and invariable system of acting, of which we accuse French women, is, however, accompanied by so many good qualities, that we should be wanting in justice not to acknowledge them. Good temper, good-nature, and a wish of obliging, are peculiar characteristics in them, and no country can boast more affectionate wives, mothers, sisters, and friends, than can France; though, unfortunately, the *exhibition* of each character is too much considered.

The visitors at the Duchesse de Montcalm's soirées were increased, if not enlivened, by the presence of some of the members of the *Chambre des Pairs*, with a sprinkling of *savans*, and a few young men of family. No name was to be heard pronounced in her salons, that did not belong to *l'ancien régime*, and noble birth and ultra politics were the only requisites for obtaining a favourable reception in them. On the *noblesse* of the imperial dynasty she looked, with contempt, if not horror; she blamed *la famille royale* for having tolerated them; and never spoke of Napoleon but as a *charlatan* set up by the *canaille*, to bring legitimate royalty into disrepute. She had a thousand *jeux d'esprit* to repeat on this subject, which were sure to be applauded by the *habitués* of her salons, who had continued to applaud them ever since the Restoration. On one occasion, when descanting on the glories of Henri Quatre, a person present having ventured to observe that Henri Quatre was *le roi de la canaille*, she made her reputation as a bel esprit, by answering, that Napoleon was *le canaille des rois*. By such bon mots a person may sometimes make a reputation in France, on which he may live for years, provided the speaker is a person of some fashion.

The young men presented a strange melange of frivolity and pedantry, the latter, like the English costume they had adopted, often rendered ridiculous by the habits induced by the former: for the grave English dress in which a French elegant envelops his person, looks not more *outré*, contrasted with the vivacious movements of the young Parisian who sports it, than does the pretending pedantry they affect, when contrasted with the natural gaiety and frivolity of their characters, which break forth continually.

Cecile drew comparisons between the young men now around her, and those she had been accustomed to meet in England. The cold politeness, yet respectful civilities of the English, were much more to her taste than the exaggerated compliments and obtrusive attentions of the French; and her thoughts often recurred to Desbrow while impressed by the forcible con-

trasts offered to him in the persons of the *petits-maîtres* who surrounded her.

Previous to their leaving the Duchesse de Montcalm's, that lady beckoned the Comte de Bethune to her, and they conversed in a low voice for a few minutes. Cecile apprehended some new subject of annoyance, nor was she disappointed when her father, during their drive home, acquainted her that la duchesse had the goodness to give up Madame de la Rue, one of her *dames de compagnie*, to act as chaperon to Cecile until she was married; as *les convenances* exacted that a young lady, even though under a father's roof, required the sanction of a female chaperon.

Cecile heard this in silence, because she had observed her father's character sufficiently, to be aware that any representations to induce him to change any plan connected with his ideas of *les convenances*, would be not only unavailing, but ill-received; yet a sigh escaped her, when she reflected that this last disagreement would destroy the consolation she hoped to enjoy in pursuing in solitude her accustomed avocations; and she looked back with renewed regret to the happy hours passed in dear England and Scotland, in the privacy of her chamber, left free to follow her various occupations whenever she wished to be alone.

The porter, attired in his night habiliments, loudly yawned while he opened the ponderous *porte cochère* to admit them; and Baptiste, awakened by the loud ringing of the bell, ran forward with eyes only half open, and a lamp half extinguished, sending forth a most offensive effluvia, to receive them in the vestibule, and lighted them to the anti-chamber, where the mingled odour of the tobacco and garlick with which he had been regaling himself, nearly overpowered the olfactory nerves of poor Cecile.

The Comte de Bethune conducted his daughter to her chamber, and having touched her forehead with his lips, wished her good night at the door; but no sooner had Cecile entered the room,—whose cold and dreary aspect, seen by the faint light of the solitary wax-candle in her hand, struck her as being even still more cheerless, when contrasted with the brilliant salons in which she had passed the evening,—than alarmed by some noise in the chamber, she turned to the quarter whence she thought it proceeded; at the same instant the candlestick was struck from her grasp, and she was left in total darkness.

In the first moment of terror, a cry escaped her; but in the next, her impulse was to regain the door, and she was pro-

ceeding in what she imagined to be its direction, when something struck against her cheek, and in the same moment she fell over a tabouret that impeded her passage. She called aloud for assistance, and was relieved by seeing Madame le Moine enter, who immediately explained the cause of her alarm, by venting sundry maledictions on *les chauve-souris*, who were flitting through the murky atmosphere of the gloomy apartment, and who during the day concealed themselves in the draperies.

"*Mais que voulez-vous, mademoiselle*," exclaimed she, "they have been so long the undisputed tenants of our hotel, that they think they may remain unmolested. It was very stupid of me not to have prepared you for these nocturnal visitants."

While she was speaking, innumerable bats continued flying about the room, to the terror of poor Cecile, who had never before come in contact with anything so disgusting, and having expressed her alarm, Madame le Moine tried to re-assure her, by declaring they would do her no harm.

"I have hundreds of them in my room," said she, "and though they frequently fly against me, and tap my cheeks when I sleep, still they do not bite, as I dare be sworn those in England do; but there, *chaque bête est méchante;* while here, they are only lively."

The prejudice of the garrulous Frenchwoman extorted a smile from Cecile; but still her accounts of the docility of Parisian bats, reconciled not her young mistress to the idea of having her cheeks tapped by them when she slept.

"Oh! if that alarms you," said Madame le Moine; I have only to draw the damask curtains of your bed closely, and pin them round, and then I defy any bat to approach you."

Cecile carefully examined the interior of the bed, and having ascertained that it had no inhabitant, she adopted Madame le Moine's plan, and then told her she might depart.

"*Comment donc, mademoiselle*," said the old woman; "am I not to have the honour of undressing you? I sat up purposely to offer my services."

Cecile told her, that she never required any aid at night; and the old woman looking at her for a few moments, with astonishment painted in her countenance, shrugged her shoulders, turned up her eyes, and then exclaimed: "*Mon Dieu! mon Dieu!* the English are the strangest race on earth! Not want any assistance at night! the moment that a French lady likes the most to chat with her *femme-de-chambre*, and hear

all that is going on in the hotel or the faubourg. Well, well, *chacun a son goût;* but, if before the revolution, any one had told me that a descendant of this ancient house could go to bed without her *femme-de-chambre*, I would have pronounced it to be a calumny."

All this was said *sotto voce*, but loud enough to be heard by Cecile, who could not refrain from smiling at observing how much this rejection of her attendance had caused her to sink in the estimation of Madame le Moine.

"Mademoiselle will pardon me," said the old woman, "if I suggest that now mademoiselle is returned to her own country, it would be more consistent with *les convenances*, that she should adopt *la mise française*. Those long *tire-bouchon* curls look terrible, and mademoiselle's robe quite disfigures her; I have purchased *le petit Courier des Dames* for the last week, in order that mademoiselle may see how a French lady ought to look; *le voilà*," (taking it up from the table) "see, *ma chère demoiselle*, how graceful, how noble, what small waists, what fulness in the *jupe!* I am sure there must be fifteen yards of silk to make that robe, and the one mademoiselle wears looks not to have above ten or eleven. It is dreadful, quite dreadful, to see a young lady of French birth so disfigured! Had you been English, I should have said nothing, for no one expects them to dress or look like other people."

"Here again," thought Cecile, "is a lesson on the toilette, and *les convenances;* the two points which seem to occupy all a Frenchwoman's attention, in whatever class of life she may find herself placed; for the tirade of Madame la Duchesse de Montcalm differs in little from the more homely dissertation of Madame le Moine,—the feeling and prejudice that dictated both are the same. Oh! would I were in dear happy England, where dress does not form the principal subject of conversation, and where people are content to attend to propriety, without putting forward their pretensions to it on every trifling occasion."

The wind shook the heavy casements of the windows, and whistled through the ill-jointed door-frames, and the owl screamed, joining its discordant notes to the howling of the blast, as Cecile counted the weary hours while sleep closed not her eyes. The flickering light of her night-lamp served only to show the dreary loneliness of the vast chamber, and she could have fancied herself the heroine of some tale of romance, shut up in a deserted chateau, had not her mind been formed of too stern stuff to give way to such idle imaginings.

At length slumber weighed down her lids; and she awoke not until Madame le Moine came to announce that Monsieur le Comte was dressing.

Cecile hurried through the duties of her toilette, that her father might not be kept waiting, Madame le Moine officiously assisting, and observing, as each fresh article of dress was drawn forth, "Oh! mademoiselle, what an *outré canzou!* it has been out of fashion in Paris for more than six weeks;" or, "what an ugly robe, or ill-made shoes!"

When she met her father at the breakfast table, he told her that he had ordered the carriage to take her to the duchesse de Montcalm's, and placing a little spangled purse in her hand, he begged she might not be sparing of its contents, as it was absolutely necessary that her whole toilette should be remodelled.

Cecile thanked him, and was on the point of explaining that she stood not in need of pecuniary assistance, as Lord Ayrshire had liberally provided for all possible wants, real or imaginary; but a moment's reflection told her that, with her father's extreme susceptibility and pride, he might take offence at Lord Ayrshire's generosity, and therefore she remained silent.

When breakfast was concluded, Madame de la Rue was announced, and Cecile could with difficulty repress the smile that rose to her lips as she fixed her eyes on her future chaperon.

Madame de la Rue was a lady of a certain, or rather uncertain, age, for whether she was fifty-five, or ten years more, it would be impossible for the most perfect judge to ascertain, thanks to the quantity of pearl-powder, rouge, and false curls, with which she had covered herself. The chinks and wrinkles, that time had traced in her visage, were filled up by a coat of white and red, so thickly laid on, that it made her countenance resemble more the face of a clown in a pantomime, than any attempt at copying nature. Her eyebrows presented a straight, heavy line of black, giving a fierceness to the twinkling grey eyes, over which they protruded, and her *crêpé* curls, of raven hue, rose in spiral form, over a brow, offering a surface like a pumice-stone. Her wide mouth, each time it opened, seemed to endeavour to reach her ears, and the tremulous motion of the false teeth that filled it, gave the idea of a wooden representation of a witch, acted on by wires, such as are seen in toy-shops. Her figure was tall and lanky; her dress *la dernière mode;* and her air offered a strange mixture of playful vivacity, dignified humility, and conscious superiority.

She tottered into the room, with that indescribable movement of helplessness and coquetry that peculiarly belongs to Parisians, demanded *mille pardons*, no one could tell for what, and declared that Monsieur le Comte, and Mademoiselle de Bethune, were *mille fois trop bons*, merely because the first offered her a chair, and the second received her with politeness.

Madame was in a perpetual flutter; at one moment pinching her dry lips, at the evident risk of losing her false teeth, and at the next, arranging her curls, or her dress, smiling all the time with all her might, and by turns looking, as she thought, insinuating, vivacious, or sentimental, as best suited the turn of the comte's remarks.

She stated that she had taken the liberty of bringing with her two favourites, from whom she could not bear to be separated, —her little dog, Bijou, and her parrot, Coco; both, she added, shared her couch; and here she affected to blush, and throw down her eyes—and were so attached to her, that she should be guilty of ingratitude,—a vice unknown to *les cœurs français bien nés*—did she not feel passionately attached to them. Were she asked, as was the Roman Cornelia, to show her jewels, she would show her Bijou and Coco, as the Roman matron showed her children,—and here, the false teeth were displayed even to their gold fastenings, by the grin with which Madame de la Rue applauded her own attempt at a classical allusion.

The carriage being announced, the comte requested Madame de la Rue to conduct Cecile to the Duchesse de Montcalm's, to commence the arduous operation of shopping; and having again and again requested his daughter to leave the choice of her purchases entirely to the duchesse, he handed her to the peristyle.

CHAPTER XXIII.

"Les reflexions que le malheur excite ne sont point sans avantage pour un jeune homme; car cela l'habitue à penser; et l'homme qui ne pense pas n'est jamais rien."

Lord Heatherfield, finding the servant of Lord Walmer confined to his bed, by the injuries he had sustained the night before, took on himself the task of apprising his lordship's agent, whose address the valet had given him, of the melancholy catastrophe that had taken place, and ordered every mark of respect to be paid to the remains of the unfortunate nobleman.

He was on the point of leaving the inn, when Sir Harry Villebois arrived, and his feelings may be more easily imagined than described, when that gentleman, on hearing every particular of the dreadful accident of the night before, and the charitable part Lord Heatherfield had taken in it, informed him that Lord Walmer was on his route to challenge him to fight a duel, and that he, Sir Harry, was to join the deceased at ——, two stages nearer to Heatherfield Park, to be his friend, and the bearer of the challenge.

Sir Harry explained that, after Lord Walmer had commenced proceedings against Lord Heatherfield, he discovered that he had not evidence sufficient to procure a divorce; this enraged him, and some statement in the papers having increased his angry feelings, he determined to call Lord Heatherfield out, and repeatedly declared that the affair should only terminate with the existence of one of the parties. It was the man whose life he was about to seek, that had vainly tried to save his, and watched by his dying bed with such deep regret.

The ways of Providence are inscrutable; had Lord Walmer lived a few hours longer, Heatherfield must have given him the meeting he was so bent on demanding; and though he was determined, in case of such an event, to receive Lord Walmer's fire, but not to return it, still his own life might, nay, most probably would, have been the sacrifice, and he should have been sent out of the world with all his sins on his head.

Lord Heatherfield was a brave man, physically and morally brave, but he was a Christian, and as such, could not contemplate a sudden death, without feelings of awe; hence, he reflected deeply on the results that had followed, and might still follow, his liaison with Lady Walmer, and his dislike towards her consequently increased.

The marriage settlement of Lady Walmer secured her a jointure of five thousand a-year; and she was now freed from the fear and scandal of an action of damages and a divorce. The house in London was also her's, for her life, so that she would find herself in affluent circumstances, and delivered from all restraint, which, to her daring spirit, and capricious mind, was ample consolation for the death of the husband she had wronged.

To join her now, Heatherfield felt would be as indelicate as indecorous; he wrote to her again, stating his intention of retiring to an estate of his, in Wales, where he should remain for some months, and where her letters would find him. He also wrote a long letter to Desbrow, inviting him, if he wished to perform an act of charity, to come to him in Wales; and having taken a cordial farewell of Sir Harry Villebois, whose frankness and good-nature had won his favourable opinion, he set out on his journey.

Impressed as he was with the melancholy scene of death which he had left, and which cast a deep feeling of sadness over his mind, still a weight was taken from his heart, as he reflected that he was now freed, for some months at least, from going to France, and meeting Lady Walmer. He hardly dared to indulge himself in the vague hopes, which often suggested themselves, that he might never see her again; for his vanity led him to believe that she loved him too well, not to persevere in urging him to become her husband, when the period prescribed by etiquette had elapsed. Had any of Heatherfield's friends been placed in *his* situation, his hopes of their release, through the inconstancy of the lady, would have been very sanguine, but, even though a man judges unfavourably of a woman, whom he believes attached to him, such is his vanity, that he is always prone to believe the passion *he* inspires, is more likely to be durable than that inspired by others.

The second day of Heatherfield's journey, he arrived late at night at Capel Carrig, and was told the inn was so crowded, that he must be content with an inferior bed-room. He sought it soon after, and was requested by the courtsying chambermaid to make as little noise as possible, as a lady, who was not

quite well, slept in the next room, which was only divided from his, by a wooden partition.

Lord Heatherfield carefully obeyed the injunction given to him, and being fatigued, soon fell asleep. He was awaked, at an early hour, by the movement in the next chamber, and in a few minutes he became all attention, when a low, sweet voice, every intonation of which had been treasured in his memory, stole on his greedy ear.

"How have you slept, my dear child?" inquired a female, in tones which he instantly recognised to be Lady Vavasour's.

"Better, much better, dear mother," replied Emily, for it was she who had occupied the room next his.

"Has that cruel pain in the side again tormented you, my love?" asked the anxious parent.

"Much less, dearest mother; and I feel infinitely better to-day."

"God be thanked! God be thanked!" murmured Lady de Vavasour; "I must take the good tidings to your father;" and so saying, she left the room.

Heatherfield felt overpowered with emotion; that dear, sweet voice, which had never addressed him but with affection, thrilled to his very heart. His Emily—ah! no longer his—but still loved—adored—she had been ill—was still suffering!—was *he*, could *he* be the cause? A pleasure, mingled with sadness, followed this thought; but alarm for an object so tenderly loved, made him tremble, as he again and again recurred to the cruel pain in the side referred to by Lady de Vavasour.

He listened with breathless attention to every movement in the next room, and her toilette being completed, he heard Emily dismiss her *femme-de-chambre*, with instructions to return in half an hour. He rose from his bed with noiseless step, and, his room being still darkened, he perceived the light coming in from some chinks in the aperture of the ill-jointed boards of the partition, which, in distending, had broken sundry small cracks in the paper which covered it.

To one of these small slits he applied his eye, and beheld Emily kneeling on a chair, offering up her morning prayer. She was much thinner and paler, than when he had last seen her but she had never appeared so lovely to him as at this moment. The look of deep devotion in her dove-like eyes, the pure and angelic expression of her beautiful countenance, had something in them that affected Heatherfield even to tears. He could distinguish each word of her prayer, so distinctly did her clear

and sweetly modulated voice pronounce it ; but his feelings may be judged, when he heard his own name murmured in faint accents, as she beseeched the Almighty to pardon his errors, to guide him through the mazy path of life, and to bless him, here and hereafter.

There was a solemnity such as he had never previously experienced in the whole tone of Heatherfield's feelings, while he listened to this touching display of her purity and piety, this tender union of earthly affections and heavenly aspirations. He could have prostrated himself before this angelic girl, not to profess the passion which he had never ceased to entertain for her, but the reverence, the gratitude she excited in his soul, and his deep sense of his own unworthiness to approach her.

When Emily rose from her knees, a heavenly calm was impressed on her face, a faint blush tinged her fair cheeks, and the inspired pencil of Raphael never pourtrayed a more seraphic countenance than her's, as Heatherfield now gazed on it. Her mother just then entered the room, and led her daughter from it, gently supporting her, and drawing a wrapping shawl over her form, attentions which Emily repaid by looks of love, that Heatherfield would have given worlds to receive and merit.

The window of his room looked into the court-yard of the inn, where he saw the travelling coach of Lord Vavasour, drawn near the door, and the servants arranging the luggage. He hastily dressed himself, and took his station at the window, whence he soon beheld Emily led to the coach between her father and mother ; but as she was about to enter it, his own carriage was drawn up, and his servant stood uncovered before it, lowly bowing.

Emily started, and uttered a faint exclamation, as she recognised the arms on the carriage, and the servant; but after a moment's pause, she recovered her self-possession, and was assisted into the coach by her father, and the party being seated, the carriage drove rapidly on, the servants on the box behind exchanging salutations with Heatherfield's servant, who looked after them with a wistful air, as if he regretted that they were going different routes.

This unexpected rencontre, had renewed, with fresh force, the attachment of Emily's lover for her. He now felt the utter impossibility of ever becoming the husband of another, even though all hope of aspiring to be her's was over. Well did he know the rigidity of Lady Vavasour's religious and moral

opinions, and the influence they must exercise over her husband and daughter. Could he expect, even were he free from all claims which Lady Walmer might assert, that Lady Vavasour would grant the hand of her pure and innocent child, to a man who stood branded before the world, as a seducer and an adulterer? No! he felt there was no hope of such happiness for him; but still a life of singleness, the power of leading a solitary existence, was comparative happiness to becoming the companion of one woman, while his whole soul was devoted to another.

The more he reflected on Emily's charms, the less could he contemplate any future alliance with Lady Walmer. Emily, on her knees, praying for him, was continually present to his imagination. He had seen her in scenes of gaiety and splendour, with all the adornments that dress could bestow, where her beauty attracted the admiration of all; but never had she beamed on his eyes with such irresistible charms, as when, pale and suffering, in a simple travelling dress, and in the paltry room of an inn, he marked the pure and holy expression of her angelic face, as she offered up her prayers to the Almighty. She seemed, indeed, an angel, who, exiled from her natural sphere, was praying to be restored to it; and her presence shed a sanctity over the chamber she occupied, that made Heatherfield, when he entered it (which he did the moment after the carriage, that contained her, had driven away), feel as if he was in a temple dedicated to the Deity. He reverentially pressed to his lips the cushion on which she had knelt, and the pillow on which her head had reposed, and he was overjoyed at finding on the table, the bouquet she had worn the preceding day, and of which he possessed himself as a treasure never to be parted with. He placed the faded flowers, wrapped carefully in paper, near his heart, and blessed the chance that had again given Emily to his sight, and proved to him that he was still remembered by her with interest.

CHAPTER XXIV.

"When I see age moving through scenes of gaiety and pleasure, its wrinkles concealed beneath a mask of paint, and its wig wreathed with flowers, I am reminded of the deaths' heads which the ancients introduced at their festivals, to recal to their memories the brevity of life, and make them enjoy with more zest the present."

When Cecile reached the vestibule, attended by *Madame de la Rue*, her father's equipage attracted her wonder, and provoked a smile, which not even the annoyance of exhibiting herself in such a one could subdue.

The carriage was a chariot, hung so high that its ascent, aided only by three steps, was an operation requiring some activity. The windows were unusually small, but to make amends for this defect, three ample lamps, of which the middle one was purely ornamental, economy precluding its use, decorated the front. The comte's arms, emblazoned on a mantle which nearly filled the side panels, and crowned by his coronet, shone resplendent on the ill-varnished carriage.

The coachman and footman wore pantaloons and top boots; the latter boasting a superfluity of the varnish that had been denied to the carriage.

The box, on which the coachman was perched rather than seated, was so raised in the middle that he was obliged to use his whip as rope-dancers do their balanciers, to preserve his equilibrium.

The horses were old and of a deep black colour; they had been bought a bargain at the sale of an undertaker, who was selling off his old stock of hearse and mourning-coach-horses; and the only alteration they had sustained in their new situation was, the cutting off a portion of their tails. Old and worn down as were the poor animals, they still retained some portion of their long practised dignity of movement. They shook their heads proudly, as in their days of funeral pomp, when nodding plumes adorned them; and persevered in their old solemn paces, no less from habit than a want of power to advance more rapidly.

The carriage once in motion, the noise it made almost deaf-

ened Cecile, and her light form was sent bounding from side to side by the jerks of its movements; she seized the holder to support herself, and turned to Madame de la Rue, to recommend her to do the same, when a violent jolt precipitated that lady against the side of the carriage, and sent her false teeth into the lap of Cecile.

The unhappy old woman grasped eagerly at them, but in the action, another *secousse* cast her chapeau at the feet of Cecile, and so deranged her wig as to leave a part of her bald head exposed, and imparted to her painted face an expression that rendered it perfectly hideous.

Cecile extended her hand to pull the check-string, that Madame de la Rue might adjust her discomposed toilette, but that lady gave her an imploring look, and tried to utter a request, which the loss of her teeth rendered inarticulate. She pulled her wig to its right position, and knelt down to collect her scattered teeth; but one of them, and that one the front tooth, was no where to be found; for, alas! it had disappeared through the window. She put on her chapeau, which she arranged by means of a pocket mirror taken from her reticule, and kept the recovered teeth safe in her pocket-handkerchief, while she firmly grasped a side-holder, to prevent further accidents.

Cecile could see her face reflected in the front glass, and never had she beheld anything so ridiculous. Much of the rouge and pearl-powder that had covered it had been taken off by their violent contact with the curls of her wig, to which they still adhered; and the expression of mingled sorrow, anger, and humiliation in her countenance, offered so strange a contrast to the comical derangement of her dress, that Cecile found it difficult to repress the smile that rose to her lips, as she glanced at her.

The vanity of Madame de la Rue led her to endeavour to explain to Cecile, that it was *not age* that had rendered it necessary for her to have recourse to false teeth and a wig; and, as she tried to express, that a fall from her horse some *short* time before, deprived her of the finest teeth in France, and a fever, in consequence of it, occasioned the loss of her superb *chevelure*, the indistinct pronunciation caused by the absence of her supplementary teeth, joined to her woful countenance, rendered her irresistibly ludicrous.

The Duchesse de Montcalm was ready to take charge of Cecile, who entered the well appointed carriage, behind which mounted two footmen, whose splendid livery and respectable

appearance would not have disgraced any aristocratic equipage in London.

The first visit was to Mademoiselle de la Tours, where *canezous* of *crêpe* were commanded; the second was to Victorine's, where Cecile had to submit to the tiresome operation of having a dress *made* on her person, that no plait or irregularity might exist in the pattern to be taken.

Cecile almost groaned audibly, as she certainly did in spirit, at being made to stand two whole hours, while this operation was going on; but the duchesse said, it was absolutely necessary; and Victorine told her, that all the ladies for whom she made dresses were compelled to undergo it.

The duchesse consulted Victorine on the best mode of concealing certain exuberances of *embonpoint* in her own person, which injured her figure; and various modes were suggested, which astonished the inexperienced girl, who knew not before, that solid flesh can be transferred from one part of the person to another, without surgical assistance; but what cannot vanity accomplish, when its votaries are bent on obeying its dictates?

From Victorine's they drove to Herbault's, where Cecile heard the duchesse request the man-milliner to study the physiognomy of mademoiselle, and to make her a chapeau to accord with it.

She felt her cheeks glow as Monsieur Herbault crossed his arms, placed himself in front of her, and fixing his eyes on her face, seemed to reflect profoundly for five minutes; at the expiration of that time, he turned to the duchesse, and declared, that he had now possessed himself of the physiognomy of mademoiselle, and would send her in three hours *un chapeau dont il répondait, irait à merveille à sa figure.*

The duchesse now attended to her own wants; she required, as she stated to Monsieur Herbault, "*un petit bonnet bien simple, avec de la blonde légère et des rubans de gaze rose bien-pâle, pour porter quand elle serait souffrante.*"

Cecile heard with astonishment a person in perfect health ordering a becoming cap for illness; but she had yet much to learn in the school she was entering. *A turban à la juive*, and *un chapeau un peu coquet*, were next commanded, with innumerable recommendations to Monsieur Herbault to attend to them particularly himself, as she (the duchesse) had not been quite satisfied of late with the head-dresses sent, which were not so becoming to her as those furnished some years before.

Cecile observed the incipient smile that played over the lips

of the man-milliner at the *naïveté* of the last observation, and anticipated, though not quite to its impertinent extent, the reflexion he uttered alone, when Madame de Montcalm's carriage drove away. "*Mon Dieu! mon Dieu! que nos vieilles dames sont coquettes; la duchesse m'en veut parce que je ne puis pas, par mes chapeaux, la rajeunir de vingt ans.*"

The Comte de Bethune and his daughter were engaged to dine at the Hotel de Montcalm, and the duchesse left Cecile at the door of the Hotel de Bethune, desiring her to be punctual at six, as she intended taking her to the opera.

Her father met Cecile in the ante-chamber, and she having told him of the duchesse's plans for the evening, entreated that she might be excused from going to the opera, as it would be most painful to her feelings to appear at any public place of amusement so recently after the death of her dear Lady Ayrshire. Tears filled the eyes of the affectionate girl as she made this request; but neither the tears nor the entreaty produced any effect on the mind of her father, who coldly told her, that as Lady Ayrshire had only been the first cousin of her mother, and consequently was only *her* second cousin, "*les convenances*,"—his favourite phrase,—could not be violated by her appearance in public; had it not been strictly according to etiquette, *he*,—as he emphatically stated,—would be the last person to accede to, or Madame la Duchesse de Montcalm to propose it.

Cecile ventured to observe that with her it was even more a matter of feeling than of etiquette; and, therefore, she should feel much obliged by not being forced to go.

"*Forced!*" repeated the comte, drawing up his eyebrows and shoulders; "in France, daughters are never forced to do anything; because they are brought up to pay *implicit* obedience to the wishes of their parents on every subject; and, therefore, that barbarous word is exploded from their vocabulary. He felt hurt," he added, "that she should have used it; when she knew him better, she would discover how much it was misplaced; but *en attendant*, he desired that he might hear no more objections to any plans of amusement proposed by the Duchesse de Montcalm;" and so saying, he retired to dress for dinner.

Cecile could not suppress the tears that gushed into her eyes, at this first proof of parental authority. She had never heard a word approaching to unkindness from Lord and Lady Ayrshire, who had studied her happiness with the same affectionate delicacy that she had ever endeavoured to anticipate

their wishes. The mournful contrast in her position, and the ever to be deplored cause that led to it, made her tears flow afresh; but, recollecting that she had little time to spare, and unwilling to offend her father, by keeping him waiting, she entered her chamber to try, by bathing her eyes in rose-water, to remove the traces of her tears.

Madame le Moine soon joined her, to assist in her toilette, and the heightened colour and increased trepidation of manner of the old dame, announced that something had discomposed her.

"*Eh bien! mademoiselle*,"—but we will give the substance of her conversation in English, for the advantage of our readers,—"who could have thought that Monsieur le Comte would have brought into the hotel an old painted coquette, more full of fancies than a monkey; who is dissatisfied with the accommodation prepared for her, and expects the old servants to wait on her, her dog, and her parrot, as if she were a duchesse, and the two latter Christians."

Cecile checked the angry verbosity of Madame le Moine, by reminding her that the comte was the best judge of the persons he wished to invite to his hotel; and that if he permitted Madame de la Rue to retain her dog and parrot, his servants had no right to resent it.

The old woman was visibly piqued at Cecile's reproof, and only added,—"Well, well, mademoiselle will soon have cause to regret her arrival in the hotel, for the *vieille folle* is a regular *Madame Touche-á-tout*, of whom all the establishment at the Hotel de Montcalm are heartily tired; and to get rid of whom, Madame la Duchesse has fixed her on the comte as *dame de compagnie*, as if mademoiselle had occasion for such an incumbrance. She has already tried to act *la màitresse femme* here," continued Madame le Moine, "but I have given her a few *coups de patte*."

Cecile observed that her father would feel much offended if Madame de la Rue was insulted, and recommended Madame le Moine to treat her with civility and respect; a recommendation the old dame seemed little inclined to attend to.

Frederic, the coiffeur, had been ordered by the duchesse to be in readiness to dress Cecile's hair, and was announced just as she had completed her own simple but becoming coiffure. She submitted her beautiful tresses to his hands, and when he had tortured them for nearly an hour, he told her, with a low bow, that at present she was *tout autre chose;* that her head

was *charmante* and *ravissante*, and that he felt certain Madame la Duchesse would be enchanted with his performance.

When he had left the room, Cecile approached the glass, and abolutely started back with surprise at the image it presented to her. The long and silken ringlets, that were wont to play over her fair cheeks, were now frizzed into *crépé* curls, an operation that had robbed them of their usual lustre. Her whole physiognomy was changed, and, as she considered, so much for the worse, that she smiled at the total metamorphosis in her appearance, and thought that she could hardly be recognised by her English friends if they saw her.

Madame le Moine was loud in her commendations; mademoiselle had no longer that English air which had struck all the world, as she stated, and was now much more like *Madame la Comtesse sa grandmère* than before; an observation which drew a smile from Cecile, though little disposed to gaiety at the moment. She felt almost ashamed to present herself with her new coiffure, but being summoned by her father, she hurried to join him, and was in some measure reassured, when he told her that, *grâce à Monsieur Frédéric*, she now looked much more presentable, and might pass for a French woman.

Though the *crépé* of Monsieur Frederic was somewhat discomposed by the rough movement of the Comte de Bethune's carriage, Cecile received the commendations of the Duchesse de Montcalm, on entering the salon, as that lady exclaimed, "*A la bonne heure, ma chère; à présent vous êtes vraiment bien, parceque vous êtes comme tout le monde,—je suis charmée de vous voir si bien coiffée!*"

The dinner was *recherché*, and passed off as most dinners do, where five persons out of the six at table, are more intent on the good things that go *into* the mouth, than the good things that come *out* of it. The Comte de Bethune ate and praised alternately, not without referring, more than once, to *la mauvaise cuisine*, in England, declaring he had not tasted an omelette that was eatable, all the time he was away, and that as to the venison, of which the English were so fond, he thought it abominable. The rest of the society, though they had not been in England, agreed with him, that, *hors de la France*, a good dinner could not be had, an opinion in which Cecile was far from joining.

The opera was "Romeo e Giulietta," and Cecile, in its fine music, soon became so absorbed as to forget the present. The duchesse talked politics incessantly, with an ambassador who

came into her box; and whatever her remarks on political economy and foreign politics might want in profundity, they amply made up for in passion and prejudice.

Cecile would have given much to have had the power of enjoying the opera without interruption, but the duchesse and her diplomatic friend seemed to forget she was one of the party. Who has not felt the power of music in awakening associations, and bringing back other scenes to the mind, with a vividness that makes one forget the present, in the past?

It was only a few months before, that, seated by her dear lost friend, Lady Ayrshire, in her box at the opera in London, she had listened to the same sounds, and from the same admirable voice. Lady Ayrshire, who loved music quite as much as did her *élève*, listened to it with the same attention; and they only expressed their admiration of the parts that most pleased them, by an interchange of looks. How did every note bring back those blissful moments? Cecile was no longer surrounded by uncongenial minds; she was, at least in spirit, with that dear and lost friend who had given and shared all the happiness of her life; and when Pasta sang "Ombra Adorata," tears gushed from her eyes, and not all the efforts she could make, could suppress the sobs that accompanied them.

The duchesse looked at her with a glance, in which wonder and contempt strove for mastery. The ambassador half smiled, as he whispered to the duchesse that, "*Apparemment, mademoiselle est bien nouvellement arrivée à Paris?*" To which she answered in a low voice, "*C'est l'esprit romanesque des Anglaises;*" then turning to Cecile, she took her arm, and led her into the back of the box, requesting her "not to make a scene, as sentimentality was quite exploded at present, and that any display of it was considered *mauvais goût*.

Cecile's pride came to her aid, she felt offended at being treated as a young miss, who was acting the sentimental, and the duchess' total want of feeling did more towards stopping her tears, than kindness or sympathy could at that moment have accomplished.

There was something of haughtiness in the air of Cecile as she dried her eyes, that repelled the continuation of the duchesse's remarks on her sensibility: though it saved her not from a lecture, on the necessity of governing every thing approaching to a display of her feelings, as they returned tête-à-tête from the opera.

"I do not prohibit you from feeling, *ma chère*," said that lady, "because that regards only yourself, and society has

nothing to do with it; but the display is *autre chose*, that must be a nuisance to others, and will expose you to ridicule, so I advise you to abandon it."

CHAPTER XXV.

"Duels are a happy invention of civilization, which enable the man, who has injured another; to shoot him also, and gives him, who has for years forfeited his honour, the power of fighting, to prove that, though he possesses not the substance, he adheres to the shadow."

Lady Walmer permitted not Heatherfield to remain long free from her painful reminiscences of their position. A letter from her soon broke in on his solitude in Wales, and achieved the disgust which had been growing towards her, ever since the fatal scene at Lord Vavasour's.

She reminded him that, if her husband's death might be attributed to him, which, however, she was not disposed to admit, adding, more logically than feelingly on the subject, that, "Lord Walmer's fatal accident having been occasioned by the overturning of his carriage, could have nothing to do with their previous conduct, the driver of the stage-coach, or his postillion being the sole cause; still *he* (Lord Heatherfield) having sought and won her affections, and consequently, led to her seeking the interview which brought about the separation from her husband, he was bound to devote his life to *her*, whom he had deprived of her natural protector. For her part," she added, "she could see no reason for postponing their marriage for longer than a month, and she had now additional motives for desiring its completion, as letters had been forwarded to her from her brother, who might be daily expected from Malta, where he had been with his regiment, and she dared not encounter him in any other character, than as the wife of the man who had injured her reputation."

The letter dropped from the hand of Heatherfield; he turned with loathing from its selfish and indelicate writer, and groaned aloud, while he asked himself if this was the woman he had once fancied he loved?

It was many days ere he could write to Lady Walmer, and when he did, his letter was so cold and brief, that it alarmed

her more than ever, as to his fulfilment of her expectations. Her next letter announced her departure for Paris, where she intended remaining in privacy, until he joined her; for on his doing so, she still seemed to count with certainty, and failed not to remind him, that he had pledged himself to this point.

Desbrow was anxious to go to Heatherfield, but knew not how to leave Lord Ayrshire, who, ever since Cecile's departure seemed to look to him alone for consolation. That excellent nobleman's health had been gradually declining, ever since the death of his lamented wife, and Desbrow had been assured by the physicians he had consulted, that, though he might linger for some months, the blow was struck, and no hopes of his final recovery could be entertained. He wrote all this to Heatherfield, who, though desirous to see his friend, was not sorry to be left in solitude, and to be saved the remonstrances of Desbrow, whose opinions were so different from his own, on the subject on which his future destiny depended, that he dreaded hearing what might wound, but could not change his feelings.

In a few weeks, Heatherfield received an intimation from his banker, that a casket of jewels had been confided to his care, addressed to him, with a letter, which he forwarded. Heatherfield broke the seal, with a beating heart; it appeared to him, that the jewels being returned, seemed to break the last bond which united him to Emily, and he dreaded to read her father's letter. But when he had perused it, his feelings were softened, and his regret, if possible, increased.

Lord Vavasour wrote dispassionately and kindly: he stated that the codicil to the Will of the late Marquis of Heatherfield, having been executed when he considered Lady Emily as the future wife of his son, it was to her in that character only that the bequest was made; consequently, the intended allianee being now at an end, the jewels could not be retained. He concluded, by an expression of good-will.

Heatherfield was as much surprised as gratified by the absence of anything like reproach in Lord Vavasour's letter, for appearances were, he was aware, so much against him, that he looked for severity rather than forbearance from Emily's father. But the fact was, that Desbrow had written an exact statement of his unfortunate friend's position to Lord Vavasour, who saw more to pity than blame in it, though the weakness of Heatherfield vexed nearly as much as it grieved him.

Week after week passed slowly away, finding Lord Heatherfield thinking only of Emily, and still less than ever disposed to

seek Lady Walmer; when, one morning, before he had left his dressing-room, he was told that a stranger desired to speak to him.

His first thought, or rather dread, was, that this stranger was Lady Walmer; for all disagreeable surprises were associated in his mind with her, and he was gratified by learning that it was a *male* and not a female stranger, who wished to see him.

On descending, he found Colonel Maynard, who explained, that he waited on him as the friend of Lord Bertie, who demanded a meeting, and was waiting at an inn, at the next post, for his answer.

Colonel Maynard expressed his regret at the painful occasion of his intrusion, but stated, that his friend, Lord Bertie, felt so keenly the unhappy scandal that had taken place, relative to his sister, Lady Walmer, that he demanded the only satisfaction Lord Heatherfield could give him; and requested him to name a friend with whom he could fix time and place.

Heatherfield explained, that this being his first visit to Wales, there was no person in his neighbourhood on whom he could call; but, that if Colonel Maynard would dispense with his having a second, whom he could not procure without sending to London, he would place his honour equally in the hands of Lord Bertie's friend, and be ready at any hour they chose to fix for the meeting.

This proposal having been accepted, six o'clock the next morning was named, and, at Colonel Maynard's request, the *valet-de-chambre* of Lord Heatherfield was to accompany him as a witness, in case of any fatal result.

Heatherfield made his Will, in which, after bequeathing a large fortune to Lady Walmer for her life, he left the whole of his family plate to Desbrow, and the jewels to Lady Emily Vavasour. This task completed, he wrote letters to Desbrow, and to Lady Walmer, to be sent in case of his death, and spent the rest of the day in reflection, and prayer to that *Almighty*, whose law he was about to violate, in exposing his life.

Duelling had often been the subject of various discussions between Heatherfield and Desbrow. The first agreed, that the system was pernicious, but wanted mental courage sufficient to oppose it in his own person; while Desbrow had often declared, that he never would fight a duel.

"But how face the world," would Heatherfield ask his friend, "with an imputation of cowardice attached to one?"

"And how face one's own conscience," would Desbrow

reply, " with the crime of murder on one's head? or else, if saved that crime, the consciousness of having risked the commission of it, and of having exposed one's own life."

Between Heatherfield, who referred all his actions to the criterion of worldly opinion, and Desbrow, who referred his only to his own conscience, there was a vast difference. Heatherfield frequently found himself in situations where his natural goodness of heart placed him in violent opposition with the conventional opinions of society, and he often yielded to its impulses, though a latent fear of the world's dread laugh or frown alarmed him.

Hence he was vacillating and infirm of purpose, and, from a too great respect to prejudices, not unfrequently fell into the line of conduct most calculated to draw on him the censures he dreaded from that society, who look only at results, and invariably neglect to examine the motives.

Never had he felt the chains imposed on him by the laws of society, weigh so heavily as now, when they forced him to a hostile meeting with a person whom he had formerly considered as a friend, and whose honour he had wounded, in the person of his sister.

Lord Bertie was of the same age as Heatherfield; they had once been thrown much together, and it was he who introduced Heatherfield to Lord and Lady Walmer; an introduction which had led to such fatal consequences.

He had been at Malta for some months with his regiment, but the heat of the climate having disagreed with him, he had returned to England, on leave of absence, to find the papers filled with the dishonour of his sister, and the death of her husband.

The elopement of Heatherfield with her, being stated in all the papers, he knew not where to seek him, until the funeral of the late Marquis of Heatherfield, and the subsequent departure of the present lord for Wales, being promulgated by the same authorities, he was furnished with a clue of which he had taken advantage.

How often, during the course of this day, did Heatherfield shudder, reflecting on the possible results of the meeting of the next morning.

He determined not to return his adversary's fire, as he felt, that having been, though unwillingly, the cause of bringing shame on the sister, he ought not to lift his hand against the life of her brother.

Bitter were the reflections of Lord Heatherfield during this

day, and he only found calmness in offering up his prayers to that God whose laws he was about to infringe. He sought, in slumber, to recover a portion of that self-possession of which he stood so much in need. But sleep refused to visit his weary senses, while memory opened to him the fatal register of the past; in which he traced through every page the records of his own weakness, that had led, step by step, to the edge of the precipice on which he now found himself. A precipice whence the first step might be to—Eternity.

Emily mingled in his every thought and prayer; the bandage that had hitherto veiled his eyes, fell off, never more to be resumed; and a bitter consciousness of his errors, now that their fatal consequences were brought before him, was impressed on his mind in ineffaceable characters.

He set out, attended by his valet de chambre, to the appointed place of meeting, and arrived there a few minutes before Lord Bertie and Colonel Maynard. The latter measured the ground, placed Heatherfield and Lord Bertie at the regular distance, and gave the signal for them to fire, as was agreed on, at the same moment. Heatherfield fired in the air, but his adversary's shot took effect, having entered his side, and he bounded from the earth, and then fell senseless to the ground.

Colonel Maynard tried to hurry Lord Bertie into the carriage, waiting for him at a few yards' distance, and in which was a surgeon, whom they had brought with them; but Lord Bertie refused to move until Heatherfield's wound was examined, and hung over him, in breathless anxiety, while the surgeon endeavoured to find where the ball had lodged.

He pronounced, that though still alive, he could give no hopes of Lord Heatherfield's recovery, and urged Lord Bertie and Colonel Maynard to fly to France.

Colonel Maynard had great difficulty in persuading Lord Bertie to enter the carriage, and they drove off, deeply shocked at the result of the duel, and the more so, as Heatherfield had not fired at his adversary.

The surgeon and *valet-de-chambre* placed Heatherfield in his carriage, and conveyed him, still in a state of insensibility, to that mansion which he had left only an hour before, in health and strength, and into which he was now brought, with scarce a vestige of life.

All in the castle was agitation and alarm. Expresses were dispatched for every surgeon of eminence within fifty miles, for his steward seemed to think, there was safety in numbers; but

Mr. Keswick, the one on the spot at the duel, left not his patient for a moment, and was doing all that skill and judgment could suggest for his recovery, though with faint hopes of success.

The wound, a most dangerous one in itself, was rendered still more so by the agitation and anxiety Heatherfield had lately undergone; but the surgeons who arrived, considered that the treatment of Mr. Keswick had been so judicious, that, finding the patient as yet free from fever, they were not without hopes of his final recovery, though, as they foretold, it must be a slow one.

CHAPTER XXVI.

"Il existe dans la nature un effet de perspective assez vulgaire pour que chacun en ait été frappé. Ce phénomène a de grandes analogies dans la nature morale. Si vous voyez de loin le versant d'une allée sur une route, la pente vous semble horriblement rapide, et quand vous y êtes, vous vous demandez si ce chemin est bien réellement la côte ardue que vous aviez naguère aperçue. Ainsi, dans le monde moral, une situation dangereuse épouvante en perspective; mais lorsque nous sommes sur le terrain de la faute, il semble qu'elle n'existe plus."

Lady Walmer remained in strict seclusion at Paris, waiting to pass the first weeks of her widowhood, and hoping that Heatherfield would then join her, to leave her no more. The death of the husband she had wronged, was hailed with feelings of satisfaction instead of regret, by this callous woman. There could now be no scandalous trial; she was in possession of a large jointure, and she saw no obstacle to her again entering the world as the wife of Heatherfield, and again exciting the jealousy and envy of those who thought the sunshine of her prosperity was eclipsed for ever. The death of the Marquis of Heatherfield, so quickly followed by that of her husband, seemed to her as an intervention of Providence in her favour; and as no trial had taken place to fix the stigma of guilt on her, she hoped that a marriage with Lord Heatherfield would restore her, if not to the former high place she held in society, at least to a respectable one. The reports in the papers could be contradicted by authority, and the whole scandal be made to pass off as a false report, originating in a mistake. She had seen Ladies E—— and G——, and half-a-dozen others, situated similarly with herself,

recover their positions in the world; then why might not she hope to be equally fortunate?

So thought and so reasoned this heartless woman, ere her husband had been three weeks consigned to the grave; and she who had so ill-performed the duties of a wife, thought of nothing else but again becoming one. She knew and felt that Heatherfield's sentiments towards her were those only of pity, and that to take advantage even of these, it was necessary for her to make him believe that their marriage was indispensable.

It was while all this was passing in her ambitious and worldly mind, that she read in the papers an account of the duel between him and her brother, and that the recovery of Heatherfield was doubtful. It instantly occurred to her, that Lord Bertie would have left England, and what so likely as his coming to France and seeking her out. She knew the severity of his principles, and that if once under his protection, she would no longer be mistress of her actions; so she determined on preserving her lately acquired liberty, by avoiding all chance of a meeting with her brother. For a few moments, she thought of setting out for Wales, and establishing herself as *garde-malade* to Heatherfield. It would be a new claim on his pity and gratitude,— but then, if he died,—(and the possibility of this event, she reflected upon without a tear)—she would have compromised herself afresh, and inevitably; nay, even if he lived, his notions of propriety might induce him to be more shocked than gratified, by her establishing herself in his house under existing circumstances; and, therefore, she determined on setting out for Italy, there to await his death or recovery.

While Lord Heatherfield was laid on the bed of pain, which it was doubtful that he should ever leave, his friend Desbrow was soothing the last hours of Lord Ayrshire, who expired three days after the duel in Wales. He bequeathed the whole of his personal property to Cecile de Bethune, with all the diamonds belonging to his late wife; and his house in town, with its splendid library and furniture, to Desbrow.

When Desbrow had paid the last duties to his departed friend, he hastened to Wales, and found Lord Heatherfield slowly recovering; the ball had never been extracted, and considerable pain was still felt by the invalid in the region where it was supposed to be lodged; but his medical attendants pronounced that his life was no longer in danger, though it would be many months ere he was restored to his former strength.

The meeting between him and Desbrow was highly affecting; the danger to which Heatherfield had been exposed, seemed to

have rendered him dearer than ever to his friend, whose heart, softened by the empire that Cecile had acquired over it, and the recent death of the excellent Lord Ayrshire, turned with increased affection to the companion of his youth, who had suffered so severely, mentally and bodily, since they had parted.

The extreme debility and langour left by Heatherfield's wound, confined him for many days to his bed, after his friend's arrival; those hours were passed with Desbrow by its side, reading to or conversing with him, his voice modulated to almost feminine softness, not to fatigue too much the over-excited nerves of the invalid.

No longer did Desbrow appear the stern monitor that Heatherfield had been wont to consider him; he was now the patient *garde-malade*, and the indulgent friend, whose lips opened but to console or cheer him, and his presence soon produced the most beneficial effect on the mental as well as bodily health of his friend.

They were some weeks together, before the name of Lady Walmer passed the lips of either. A fear of agitating Heatherfield prevented Desbrow from touching on a subject, which he knew to be so painful, and a dread of interrupting the calm which had stolen over his lately-embarrassed mind, induced Heatherfield to avoid it.

Letters were delivered one day to Desbrow in the presence of his friend, who having casually cast his eyes on his face while perusing them, was struck by the change in his countenance, and also by Desbrow's sighing; and then looking at him, with an expression of pity in his looks, which convinced Heatherfield that the letter his friend was reading related particularly to him. Their eyes met, and Desbrow's were instantly withdrawn in confusion, which still more confirmed Heatherfield in his opinion that there was some reference to him in his friend's letter. He laid his hand on Desbrow's, and entreated him to tell him if his suspicions were correct.

Desbrow endeavoured to evade the subject, but Heatherfield becoming more anxious, he at length admitted that the letter contained some intelligence that had given him pain, and which was calculated to grieve Heatherfield.

"Let me hear it, I beg of you," said the latter; "suspense only aggravates an evil; I am prepared for anything, but do not keep me in doubt."

"Well, then," said Desbrow, "I have heard from Cecile de Bethune, who keeps up a regular correspondance with Lady

Emily Vavasour, and who informs me that she is in very delicate health."

"Alas! this I already know," said Heatherfield; who now informed his friend of the meeting at the inn, on his route to Wales, and of the powerful effect it had produced on his feelings."

Confidence once established, every thought of Heatherfield's was now laid open to Desbrow, who listened with deep attention and sympathy to the development of his friend's sentiments.

"Then you still feel the same devoted attachment to Lady Emily?" asked Desbrow.

"Can you doubt it," replied Heatherfield, "when every thought, every wish, of my heart, have her, and her only, for their object."

"And, yet," said Desbrow, "with this fond and exclusive attachment for one woman, you have been, from a mistaken sense of honour, on the point of devoting the rest of your life to another. Let me speak to you with candour, my dear Heatherfield," continued his friend; "recollect that in discharging what you believe to be a duty prescribed by honour, you are violating the more sacred duties commanded by morality and conscience. In winning the affections of the young and unsophisticated heart of Lady Emily Vavasour, you became bound to her, and her only, by every tie that true honour can impose. In yielding you her heart, she broke through no duties,—violated no ties,—and, sanctioned by her parents, who reposed a perfect confidence in you, she bestowed on you her undivided affection. She was taught to consider herself as your affianced wife,—her family and your own looked on her as such,—and a few days would have ratified at the altar the vows of unalterable attachment which you had exchanged. Your evil genius, in the shape of Lady Walmer, interposes between you and happiness, by a conduct at once the most selfish and indelicate. She seeks you out, even beneath the roof of the pure being to whom she knew you were betrothed. She practises on your vanity, and forces you into a situation, the detection of which leads to her exposure, and she then calls upon you to pay the penalty of *her* bad conduct. You, my dear friend, have been only weak, but she has been most wicked; and yet to such a person are you sacrificing not only your own happiness, but that of a pure and charming creature, formed to present a model of domestic virtue as a wife, as she already does as a daughter. Every feeling of your own heart is at variance with the sacrifice Lady Walmer would impose on you; and surely every sentiment of morality must oppose

it. You cannot respect, or place confidence in a woman whose conduct has been so wholly deficient in propriety and virtue,—and can you pass your life with, or give your name to, one in whom you cannot place implicit reliance? She, who knows you love another, and yet could demand you to devote yourself to her, is totally unworthy of such a sacrifice, and in making it, you become her dupe. Forget that artificial, that vitiated circle, in which a false code of conventional rules has taken the place of that high and pure morality, of which they are ignorant. Morality can never dictate to you to marry a woman who has compromised herself, and you also,—not by yielding to your seduction, but by following the impulses of her own ill-governed mind. If you loved her, I should say, marry her not; because I know, that, without fixed principles, the happiness of even a marriage of affection must be insecure; but not loving her, to marry would be weakness, worse than weakness,—folly. I see you are going to tell me that you owe her a reparation; but, you, my dear Heatherfield, have started from the beginning of this fatal business with a false notion; hence, all your inferences have been incorrect. You reason, and would act, as if *you* had sought and pursued *her*, and led her to the precipice that has engulphed her; whereas, it was *she* who pursued you, when you had left her, as you thought, for ever, and lured you to that scene, which ended in her deserved exposure. The repugnance you feel to her makes you doubtful of your own motives, and leads you to think you are performing a duty, because you are acting against your wishes; when, to a calm and dispassionate judgment, duty, honour and reason, alike pronounce against your forming any alliance with Lady Walmer. Were you to-morrow her husband, you could not regain for her the position which she formerly held in society,—an inferior one *she* could not brook without feelings that would embitter her life and your's too; so that in marrying her, you not only impose a dreadful penance on yourself, but avail her nothing by your sacrifice. I talk to you at present in a worldly point of view on this subject, because, unfortunately, you have hitherto only considered it with a reference to worldly opinions. But look at it as it refers to morals, and you will see, my dear friend, that in marrying Lady Walmer, you are dooming yourself to misery, and rewarding bad conduct and the most gross and unblushing selfishness, with the sacrifice of your happiness and respectability."

The reasoning of Desbrow fixed the wavering mind of Heatherfield, and he promised his friend, that he never would become the husband of Lady Walmer,—a decision which

Desbrow urged him to communicate to that lady, with as much promptitude and candour as possible.

From the moment that Heatherfield adopted this wise resolution, his mind became more composed, and his health began to regain its former vigour; he addressed a long and explanatory letter to Lady Walmer, in which he informed her that, "finding it impossible to conquer the affection he felt for another, he never could offer her his hand." He reminded her that, "when he promised to devote himself to her, she was a deserted wife, threatened with a scandalous exposure, by a trial and divorce, of which, as he had been the involuntary cause, he was willing to make the only amends in his power; but now," he added, "the case was wholly changed, she was a widow, with a large fortune; no trial or exposure menaced her, and the fact of their being in different countries, would contradict the statements which had been made in the papers." He reminded her that, "from the moment of meeting her at Lord Vavasour's, he had never made her a single profession of attachment, nay, that he had candidly confessed to her his attachment to another. Reflection had taught him that their union was incompatible with his happiness, and never could insure her's, and that therefore he had abandoned the idea of it for ever."

This letter dispatched, his mind was at rest from one painful subject, but turned to another with deep and unceasing interest.

CHAPTER XXVII.

"Mais du sein des plus tristes pensées peut naître chez la femme un sentiment qui la rappelle à sa véritable destinée, qui est d'aimer. Tel on voit dans un terrain ravagé s'élever du milieu des ruines un arbuste qu'elles devaient engloutir."

Emily Vavasour did not yield to the despair that threatened to wreck her peace, when Lord Heatherfield was found to be unworthy of her affection, without struggling, as only a woman can struggle, with a passion that had interwoven itself with her very being; and for the conquest of which, health, nay life itself, too often pays the price.

However appearances were against Lord Heatherfield, and though her reason was forced to condemn him, her heart still refused to assent to his condemnation; and she pitied, more than she blamed, a conduct that destroyed her happiness, but could not triumph over her affection. How often did she recal to memory the happy hours passed in his society, the delightful plans for the future, and the innumerable traits of delicacy, and a high sense of honour, which she had so frequently discovered in his sentiments. Their last interview, when, with such visible agitation, he had intreated her, however appearances might be against him, never to believe that he could ever love another, often came back to her recollection; and well did she fulfil this his last request!

Such was her perfect freedom from selfishness, that, could she have been assured that Heatherfield was happy, she believed that she would have been less wretched; but, judging of his feelings by her own, she knew that his sufferings must be aggravated by the consciousness of having entailed unhappiness on her; and, while all pronounced against him, this pure and noble-minded girl, the only sufferer from his conduct, wept over his errors, and pitied him more than herself.

From the moment that Emily had considered Heatherfield as her affianced husband, she had not only viewed him as the partner and protector who was to cheer her path on earth, but with whom she was to share eternity. She had, in their hours of confidence, mingled aspirations of another world, with her hopes of happiness in this, and Heatherfield had listened to her with pleased attention, thinking that, "truths divine came mended from that tongue." Religion had never before been presented to him under so attractive a form; it had been an abstract point in his mind, seldom referred to, and, alas! still more seldom made the guide of his actions. It was something to be adopted when the hey-day of his blood should be over, when pleasure no longer should beckon him with her smiles; in short, like too many, he thought rarely on the subject, and when he did think, postponed attending to its dictates until age should have rendered him unfit for aught else.

Thus it is but too often, to that *Being*, who has given us *all*, we refuse to offer the flowers or fruits of our lives, and are only willing to give the withered leaves, that the winter of existence has left us, happy if we are not cut off in the midst of our hopes, and forced to yield to death, when we had prepared only for life.

Of all the passions, a pure and sincere love is the one which

most tends to elevate the mind to its Creator. The insufficiency of life, for perfect happiness, then first makes itself felt, and who, that has loved and reflected, as all must, on the precarious tenure of existence, and on the possibility of the object, that lends life all its charms, being snatched from us, without feeling the necessity of religion, to prolong, in another world, the happiness that blesses, or blessed us, in this. This sentiment is always felt, in proportion to the affection entertained, and it chastens and refines it; for never is the person beloved, so tenderly cherished, as when the lover reflects on the possibility of such a separation, and clings to that faith which offers the only hope of reunion.

Emily Vavasour had taught Lord Heatherfield the first lessons of religion; he imbibed them, with those of love, which she had inspired, and she had seen, with such true delight, the interest with which he listened to her, when she breathed her meek hopes of their union being sanctified in a future existence, that, in mourning over his errors, she wept not less for the Christian turned from the right path, than for the husband who was to have brightened her's. Day after day, her cheek became paler, her form lost its rounded contour, and her eyes their brightness; but still she complained not, and tried to assume a cheerfulness foreign to her heart, to conceal from her doting parents the sorrow that was preying on her peace. She endeavoured, but in vain, to bear up against it; the struggle was more than her gentle nature could support, and it made such rapid inroads on her health, as to terrify Lord and Lady Vavasour, who might be said to live but in their child.

Emily no longer hoped for happiness on earth, but she prayed that health and peace might be granted her, to enable her to cheer and solace the old age of her parents, who looked to her, and her only, for happiness. She had opened every secret of her heart to Cecile, who had been the confidant of her affection, from the day that Lord Heatherfield had demanded her hand; and, now that her hopes were blighted, she had a melancholy pleasure in writing to her absent friend, and pouring forth to her the feelings that she concealed from her parents, but whose effects were only too visible in her altered looks and broken health.

Desbrow had explained to Cecile the fatal entanglement of Lord Heatherfield, and his unabated attachment to Emily, and Cecile had made her friend acquainted with it. The following is an extract from Emily's answer to that letter, which better shows the state of her feelings, than the most laboured description would do.

"I am aware, my beloved Cecile, of the kindness of your motive, for telling me that I am still loved by Heatherfield. In the confidence of a friendship, that has never known restraint, and in the belief, that a few days would have seen me the wife of Lord Heatherfield, I opened every secret of my heart to you, and the affection that heart cherished for him, was revealed in all its warmth,—all its sincerity.

"He has placed an insurmountable barrier between us; and you, dearest, would try to soothe the womanly feelings so deeply, cruelly, wounded, by telling me, I am still beloved. Alas! this conviction has never left me; but, far from soothing, it only adds to my grief; for, in addition to supporting the pangs of my own disappointed affection, I have to feel for him, who is more unhappy, because self-reproach must be added to his sorrow.

"Heatherfield's is not a mind to bear up against the knowledge that he is living in sin and shame, without suffering bitterly; and the unhappy woman who has caused this misery, is little calculated to alleviate it.

"Think not that I utter this censure in bitterness, I do not entertain the feeling: but, oppressed as she must be with the remorse that never fails to pursue conduct like her's, she cannot soothe those self-reproaches, which inevitably must be experienced by him who has sacrificed for her every moral and religious duty.

"The picture of two persons condemned to drag on existence together, no longer able to respect each other, and having forfeited the respect of others, is too melancholy to be contemplated without dread.

"It is in this fearful position, that the image of him, so loved, presents itself to me, wearing away life, in sin and shame, and wishing, yet fearing, death.

"You know, dearest Cecile, that I have ever looked on life as a gift of such brief duration, that a future world has occupied more of my thoughts than the present. I had garnered up my hopes of meeting *him* there, after having fulfilled our pilgrimage on earth; but now,—I dread to look forward to that future state, which has hitherto formed the bright vista of all my views; for his conduct not only separates us *here*, but terrifies me for *hereafter*. He believes, that in devoting himself to a married woman, he is performing a duty imposed by honour; but when the duties, honour imposes, are performed at the expense of morality and religion, he who fulfils them must have little

knowledge of true religion, or he could not neglect its sacred laws in obedience to worldly conventions."

When the intelligence of Lord Walmer's death reached Emily, she naturally concluded that Lord Heatherfield's marriage with the widow would take place, as soon as decency allowed it; and, though some natural tears filled her eyes, at the thought that another would stand in that relation to him, which she once thought herself destined to fill, still the pure sentiments of disinterested affection triumphed over selfish feelings, and she rejoiced that *he* would no longer be compelled to live in sin and shame, and that his union with Lady Walmer would be rendered respectable, if not happy, by the nuptial benediction.

She wrote to Cecile, about this period, and referring to her feelings, said, "I have hitherto wasted much of my health and peace, in ineffectual struggles to banish Heatherfield from my heart; there is something so indelicate in the notion of cherishing an affection for one who has devoted himself to another, that it has humiliated me in my own eyes; but now that he will soon be the husband of Lady Walmer, I trust I shall have courage to think of him but as one, to whom I wish happiness, and for whom I pray with as much sincerity as when I hoped to partake his lot. Whenever, and, alas! it is but too frequently I find his image intrude itself on my mind, I have recourse to prayer, and I find this, which, in other and happier days, added to my happiness, now soothes my feelings, and sheds a balm, that reason alone could never bestow."

CHAPTER XXVIII.

"In aping the manners of foreign countries, we lose what is best in our own, and only expose ourselves to the ridicule of those we imitate."

Time passed heavily with Cecile, for whom the gaieties of the French capital had little charms. Her forbearance was often put to the proof in the society of the Duchesse de Montcalm, where the same system of re-modelling her person was continued; and, in addition to which, constant attempts to re-model her mind, as well as manners, were made. Her natural dignity was

considered as English stiffness; her feminine timidity, *gaucherie*, and her maidenly reserve, as prudery.

The duchesse often stated, that all things considered, it was fortunate that *la petite* Cecile had secured a rich English husband; for, certainly, she was not formed to shine at Paris,—the grand object of a Frenchwoman's life,—and in this opinion, Cecile perfectly coincided.

While waiting for their carriage, one night in the vestibule of the Opera, the sounds of familiar voices struck on the ear of Cecile, in the following dialogue :—

" Well, Lady Scamper, you may call this pleasure, but I call it an infernal bore. Our carriage was announced, and because you chose to stay chatting with some of your new friends, the *gens-d'armes* have sent it off: and here we are, in a pleasant position, What's to be done now? I can't go *parley-vouing* in search of it, that's clear. "

" You really are incorrigible, Lord Scamper; would you have me be as rude and ill-bred as yourself, to break off a conversation with the charming Marquise de Vaudeville, merely because the carriage was called? Have I not remained in the round room of the opera, in London, a full half-hour, while the Stentorian lungs of half-a-dozen link-boys re-echoed my name; and why not do the same here?"

" Why! for the simple reason, that in London we have no *gens-d'armes* at our theatres; but here, as you must observe, it is quite different: but it serves you right, you never were, never would be, satisfied, till you came to Paris, and a pleasant time I have had of it, ever since we have been here. Cheated and starved into the bargain, you pretend to be charmed with every thing, just out of opposition to me; but if ever you catch me at Paris again, why I give you leave to hang me."

While this conversation was going on, the loud tones of Lord Scamper attracted the attention of all the persons who passed near him; and they smiled, whispered, and shrugged their shoulders, by turns, to the no small horror of Lady Scamper, who, in vain, endeavoured to impose silence on her lord. At this moment, he caught a glance of Cecile, and leading his wife to her, he held out his hand, and declared, he was dilighted to meet Mademoiselle; it so reminded him of England.

Lady Scamper expressed great pleasure at renewing her acquaintance with Cecile, and professed to be charmed with Paris, and the Parisians.

" We have only been here a few days," continued Lady

Scamper, " and had I known where to find you, I should have certainly been at your door. "

" Well, Ma'amselle, " said the obtuse lord; " I must confess, you don't look as rosy as you did in Scotland; but no wonder, for I dare say, if the truth were known, you have been starved, like us: nothing but *kickshaws*, day after day, washed down by sour wine after. For me, I have lost eight pounds in my weight since I have been here; a good thing for Juno and Nimrod, but devilish bad for me. Talk of their restaurants, indeed, a droll way to restore one, by starvation. "

" Do, pray, spare Mademoiselle de Bethune the enumeration of your miseries," said Lady Scamper, with an air of disdain.

" Why, I don't see why I should not speak out, " replied the husband; " ma'amselle was always good-natured and civil, and will pity me; while you, who were always of one mind with me before we were married, have never once agreed in opinion with me, ever since. "

" *Mon Dieu, il est désespérant!*" said the Lady Janet, now metamorphosed into Lady Scamper, turning her eyes to Cecile.

" Ay, there you go again, with your French, which no one can understand; why, would you believe it, ma'amselle, when she spoke to the waiter, the first day, he told her he did not understand German."

The Duchesse de Montcalm stood aloof all this time, regarding Lord Scamper with looks in which disgust was depicted, and her carriage being announced, she nodded to Cecile with one of her most imperious glances, to accompany her. Nearly at the same moment, Lady Scamper's *laquais de place* cried out that *la voiture de Milord Scampere* was ready, to which her lord conducted that lady, amid a crowd of grinning spectators and laughing *laquais*, but not, however, until Lady Scamper had obtained the address of Cecile, and declared her intention of visiting her next day.

" *Grâce à Dieu!* we are rid of your vulgar English friends," exclaimed the duchesse, as the door of her carriage was closed; " who ever saw such people? I was horrified lest any of my acquaintances should have seen us:—you must really contrive another time, not to see persons of this description, otherwise, we shall be mixed up in some caricature of *les anglais pour rire*, and exhibited on the stalls of the Boulevards. *Dieu, quel homme! et Milady, comme elle était fagotée.*"

Cecile knew that any defence of her acquaintances, would only

tend to draw down on them the still greater displeasure of the duchesse; but, had she been inclined to make one, her's would have been a difficult task, for candour forced her to acknowledge, that, as far as exteriors went, — the only point by which the duchesse judged people,—their's were preeminently ridiculous.

Lady Scamper was dressed in the extreme of *la mode*, and affected all the *minauderies* of a Parisian *petite maîtresse*, but so clumsily executed that it became a caricature; her broad Scotch accent rendered her French not only unintelligible, but ludicrous, and the loud voice and John Bull-air of her *caro sposo*, contrasted most ridiculously with her attempt at refinement and French elegance.

Lady Janet had flattered Lord Scamper so judiciously, by assenting to all his opinions, and admiring his appearance, that he had rewarded her exertions to please him by the offer of his hand,—an offer which was gladly accepted,—and she became Lady Scamper, soon after Cecile had left Scotland.

Lord Scamper observed to a friend, a few days previous to his marriage, that he " never would have tied that knot with his tongue which he could not untie with his teeth, "—meaning the nuptial tie, —" had he not found a woman who said amen to all he was pleased to utter.

" My spaniel Dido is not more submissive, " said Scamper; " for though I try Lady Janet by contradicting flatly to-day, what I maintained yesterday, it is all the same to her; she never has any opinion but mine: this is what I call the only solid foundation to build matrimonial happiness upon; and so I have made up my mind to marry."

But no sooner did the Lady Janet find herself installed in the honours of wedlock, than she decided on using all the privileges that state bestowed; and her sapient lord, a few weeks after, acknowledged to the same friend, that marriage was the drollest thing in the world for changing people; now, there's Lady Scamper, she's no more like Lady Janet that was, than I'm like Hercules. Would you believe it, that she who was so fond of horses and dogs a few weeks ago, that she would talk to me by the hour of Juno, Nimrod, and Dido, now declares that she can't abide the sight of horses out of Hyde Park or the streets, and as for dogs, she abhors them? Whatever I think, she is sure to think the contrary; so that I may say, that ever since the law made us *one*, we have been *two*, for we have never agreed on any single point ever since."

The first exertion of Lady Scamper's powers was exemplified in their visit to Paris; he detested France and French people,

but she carried her point of fixing him in all the discomfort of an *hôtel garni* in the rue de Rivoli, where he vented his discontent in curses both loud and deep, from " morning sun till eve of dewy night. "

While Lady Scamper was occupied with a host of milliners, dress-makers, &c., &c., her lord was left to his own resources: he strolled into the yards of all the horse-dealers, but returned in disgust, declaring he could only find there all the done-up horses of London for the last two seasons, for which the Parisian *maquignons* demanded thrice their original value. The club in the rue de Grammont was next resorted to; and here he found time pass more quickly, if less profitably, than in other places : for a rubber of whist, a party at écarté or piquet, beguiled the time from three in the afternoon to half-past six, and his banker's book soon bore evidence that his foreign acquaintances excelled in these games, if they were less expert at his favourite amusement of hunting.

While the husband got rid of hundreds at the club, the wife expended no small sums with the *artistes* whom she favoured with her commands, and ere she had passed a fortnight at Paris, she had incurred debts to more than the amount of the year's pin-money paid her in advance, and which she had brought with her to France. She had always heard that everything was so cheap at Paris, that she could see no necessity for refusing herself any article of dress that pleased her fancy; and it was not until she had seen the bills sent in, that she discovered that fifteen louis for a dress hat, and nearly half that sum for one for the morning, quickly made the bill of her *modiste* run up to a sum, the contemplation of which lengthened her visage, in proportion to its curtailment of the contents of her purse. Paris, then, after all, was not the cheap place she had heard of, and Monsieur Herbault was a *dear* man in more senses than one. Positively she must buy no more, and what was very provoking, she must ask Lord Scamper to advance her a portion of her next year's allowance, to enable her to pay her debts.

Lord Scamper had returned to his hotel an hour later than his usual time, a loser of several hundreds, and in a state of ill-humour with himself and all the world,—but, no! we must expunge the last part of the sentence, for his ill-humour extended only to the Parisian world, while his partiality to England, and every thing English, rose in proportion to his dissatisfaction with France. He found his better-half ready dressed to receive him, and was greeted by a kind smile,—a demonstration

of welcome that had of late become a stranger to her lips at his approach,—instead of, as he expected, an angry reproof for having kept her waiting dinner. As usual, he found the dinner execrable, and expressed his disgust of its component parts, to which Lady Scamper cordially assented. No less gratified than surprised, at this agreeable change in her opinions and manners, he ventured, after something between a sigh and a groan, to pronounce that Paris was an infernal place.

"I quite agree with you, my dear William," said Lady Scamper; "it is an abominable place, not fit to be compared to London. Only fancy, but no! you cannot fancy such a thing, as that abominable *modiste* charging me fifteen louis for each of my chapeaux, while I, poor simple creature, believing they could be had here so much cheaper than in London, have bought not less than twelve, fancying that I was economising, God knows how much! Then, Foissin has persuaded me to have such a number of pretty things from him, that hearing the price only in francs, I did not quite understand the actual amount; and, lo and behold, I find that I owe him two hundred louis, when I fancied that fifty would more than pay him: I really must ask you, my dear William, to lend me three or four hundred pounds in advance of my next year's pin money."

"The devil you must!" said Lord Scamper; "well, Janet, I must say, you have made a neat affair of your visit to Paris, and your knowledge of the French language. I always told you *they* did not understand *you*, and it is now quite clear, *you* did not understand them."

"It is quite useless," returned Lady Scamper, her colour rising while she spoke, "to dwell on what cannot now be remedied; lend me the money, and henceforth you shall not have to complain of my imprudence."

"What you ask, is much easier said than done," replied the husband, "for while you left me on my own hands, in self-defence, in order to kill time, I went to the club in the rue de Grammont, and, hang me, if those cursed Frenchmen have not cleaned me out of above two thousand, the sum I had appropriated to this pleasurable trip of your's."

"Why you surely can't mean to say, that you have lost *two* thousand pounds?" said Lady Scamper; "this really would be folly; and so, Lord Scamper, you think you have the right of blaming me for spending a few paltry hundreds, for which I have, at *least*, something to show, while *you* have lost thousands, and can show nothing but your ill-humour and ill-breeding to me."

A scene of mutual recrimination here ensued, but the eloquence and lungs of the lady, having conquered those of her lord, a treaty of peace was signed, of which the basis was, an oblivion of the past fortnight; a draft to Lady Scamper for five hundred pounds; a promise that my lord would play no more, which he religiously resolved to keep; and a determination, on the part of her ladyship, that she would buy no more, *unless* something *very*, *very* pretty, should chance to tempt her.

Lord Scamper indulged in a few extra glasses of Sherry to cheer his depressed spirits; and then escorted his wife to the opera, where, as we have already shown, they encountered Cecile de Bethune, and her haughty chaperon.

CHAPTER XXIX.

Une union privée des rapports de goûts et d'éducation est nuisible à la paix, et porte obstacle au bonheur."

Even-tempered as was Cecile de Bethune, she found it difficult to bear with equanimity, the various domestic annoyances with which she had to contend. Madame de la Rue, from being constantly present, was the most insupportable; for she destroyed all the hours of privacy that might otherwise have passed tranquilly. She thought herself obliged to be always in attendance, and had not that most essential of all requisites, in a *dame de compagnie*, the art of sitting still, or silently following some sedentary occupation. If Cecile was drawing, reading, or writing, Madame de la Rue would move to different parts of the room, in search of something, which, when found, seemed no longer necessary; she would beat time with her fingers on the table, or with her feet on the tabouret; bend forward every fifteen minutes, to look at the pendule on the chimney-piece; and give sundry other symptoms of ennui and fidgetism, of which not all Cecile's powers of abstraction could enable her to resist feeling the influence.

Her parrot and lap-dog were, for the first few days, established in Cecile's salon, where they displayed their powers of pleasing, very much to the delight of their mistress, but to the total discomfiture of Cecile, who found it so impossible to pursue

her usual avocations, while one screamed as incessantly as the other barked, that she was forced to request that they might be banished her presence;—a request that Madame de la Rue resented, at least, as far as *les convenances* permitted her to show her sense of the slight offered to her favourites. She gave sundry hints of the hardness of some hearts, that could be insensible to the domestic affections; her Coco had more attractions than any child, without its defects; and as to her dear, sweet Bijou, "he was," as she stated, "unrivalled. Such was his intelligence, that, if any one asked the dear creature where was his *belle maîtresse*, he instantly ran to her, and seized her robe; he could imitate the scream of the parrot so perfectly, that it was almost impossible to distinguish the difference; and, she must add, that poor dear Coco nearly equalled Bijou in intelligence, for it could imitate his bark perfectly, which never failed to vex Bijou so much, that he retorted by screaming like Coco."

The disagreements between Mesdames de la Rue and Le Moine had daily increased; the latter declared that her slumbers were broken every night, by Bijou and Coco, and the former stated the utter impossibility of her closing her eyes, if both did not share her chamber. The two Frenchwomen never met without a quarrel, and never parted without increased dislike, which neither were disposed to dissemble. Madame de la Rue declared that her *café*, that indispensable requisite of a Frenchwoman's comfort, was opaque, and smoked, *too* constantly to admit of her attributing it solely to chance; and a malicious smile from Madame le Moine, when the accusation was made, tended rather to confirm than refute the charge.

Cecile had been frequently appealed to by both parties, and had adopted the diplomatic measure, in doubtful cases, of inculcating the doctrine of conciliation and mutual forbearance. But neither of the belligerents were disposed to be guided by so pacific a counsel; the war, therefore, was carried on by mutual aggression, until hatred took the place of dislike. Madame de la Rue taught Coco to cry out "*Vieille laideron*," the moment Madame le Moine appeared, and Bijou was trained to bark furiously, and to pull the lower end of her drapery, when she entered the room. This produced an ungovernable rage on the part of Madame le Moine, who, to be revenged, taught the large parrot, before noticed, in the antechamber, to cry out "*Vieux monstre*," every time Madame de la Rue passed through it.

This state of things had gone on for several weeks, when the morning after Cecile had encountered Lord and Lady Scamper at the opera, the parrot and lap-dog of Madame de la Rue

wandered from her chamber to the ante-room, and by some mischance, suspected to be not purely accidental, a *cafetière* of boiling *café* was upset over Bijou, and Coco received sundry personal injuries; at least, so concluded Madame de la Rue, who was drawn by the reiterated screams of her favourites to the spot whence their cries proceeded. Her presence seemed to increase their screams; they both rushed to her protecting arms, which were extended to receive them, and a new silk dress, whose purchase had nearly drained the purse of Madame de la Rue, soon bore ineffaceable proofs of Bijou's accident, as streams of *café* mixed with dust, and portions of the coat of her canine pet, covered the whole of the front of her robe, as well as the corsage and sleeves. The old parrot no sooner recognised her, than in its loudest, shrillest tones, it reiterated the cry of "*Vieux monstre!*" while her own ill-used bird, with plumage ruffled, and angry eyes, fixed its glance on Madame le Moine, and screamed, "*Vieille laideron! Vieille laideron!*" and Bijou, barking and whining by turns, wiped himself dry in the best silk dress of his luckless mistress.

The vociferation of the parrots, so insulting to the *amour propre* of both the old Frenchwomen, increased their anger, until it became ungovernable, and they vented it in every term of reproach with which their copious vocabulary of insulting epithets furnished them.

It was at this moment, that Lord and Lady Scamper entered the arena of battle, and both, for a moment, stood confounded at the scene which presented itself, and the war of words from the two combatants, mingled with the screams of the parrots, and the violent barking of Bijou. Lord Scamper quickly recovered himself, and entering with true zest into the ludicrous exhibition before him, cried out, "Go it, my hearties! well done, old ones! five to two against the dog-woman! the one with the keys has it hollow!" while Lady Scamper, half frightened, yet amused, followed the servant, who at length vouch safed to attend to her request to be led to Mademoiselle de Bethune.

"I say, old ones, suppose you box it out, instead of scolding, ay, by Jove, and pit the parrots against each other? What a pity we have not a second dog to fight with that yelping cur!"

The Frenchwomen understood not a single word of Lord Scamper's address, but they saw enough by his smiles and animated gestures, to conclude that he was ridiculing them, an indignity which they deeply resented, and both turned on him with a torrent of abuse, that, luckily for his lordship, he as little comprehended, as they did his English. He being of the old

opinion, that discretion is the better part of valour, quitted the ante-room, and entered the salon, nearly convulsed with laughter.

Lady Scamper had employed the moments of his absence, in giving Cecile a hurried statement of her ill-assorted marriage, its consequent *désagrémens*, and her regrets.

"You can form no idea, my dear friend," said she, "what a dreadful person he is, he exposes me in every society, can talk of nothing but horses and dogs, and makes me blush for him every moment."

Cecile could not resist telling her, that, as Lord Scamper had always, before marriage, chosen these topics for his conversation, the annoyance was not a new one.

"True," replied Lady Scamper, blushing through the rouge that covered her cheeks; "but then, that was in England, where people were accustomed to his ways, and where his fortune and station being known, his vulgarities were tolerated. But here, *ma chère, c'est autre chose*, I see all the French people at the ambassador's, shrugging up their shoulders, and shrinking away from him in horror; while the English, afraid of being confounded in the ridicule he excites, draw away from him, as if he was some low-born cit, instead of being a nobleman of large fortune."

"Then, if you will permit me to offer you my opinion," said Cecile, "I should advise your staying in England, where, as you say, people are accustomed to the harmless peculiarities of Lord Scamper, and where his station and fortune command respect."

At this moment, the subject of their conversation entered the room, and when his violent paroxysm of laughter permitted him to speak, he addressed Cecile with, *Bong jour! bong jour!* there's French for you, mademoiselle; you see what a progress I make in *parley-vouing*."

"For pity's sake, Lord Scamper," said his wife, "spare my nerves, you really make me ill with your barbarous attempts at French."

"Well, there's a good one, however," replied his lordship, "would you believe it, Miss Bethune?"

"Good Heavens, Lord Scamper," interrupted my lady, "how can you be so shocking as to call Mademoiselle de Bethune—*miss?*"

"Why, did not you stop me short, a minute before, for what you called my barbarous attempts at French, and then, the minute I speak English, you fly out at me again. You are fifty times more fretful than Juno ever was, though I look on her as the most fidgetty mare in England."

"I beg, Lord Scamper, that you will not make any of your vulgar comparisons."

"Vulgar comparisons! whew! whew!" whistled the fox-hunter; "well, that's a good one! Why, I say that there is not a woman in France, ay, or in England, that might not be flattered to be compared to Juno, and she beats you out hollow, being ten times better on her pins, and neater about her pasterns."

"Pray, remember that you are not in the stable, or conversing with your grooms," retorted Lady Scamper angrily.

"Oh! for the matter of that," said his lordship, "I have talked to you about Juno, and all the rest of my stud, much more than ever I talked to my grooms, and I never saw any of them take half so much interest in the subject,—that was, before we were married, when you persuaded me that you liked horses and dogs, just as much as I do; though, ever since the knot has been tied, you affect to dislike them. Hang me, if ever I would have married you, if you had not led me to believe that our tastes perfectly agreed; and I say, it has been a devilish take-in, on your part."

Lady Scamper blushed deeply, and endeavoured to change the subject, as the *naïveté* of her husband's retorts led her to fear he might be still more communicative.

The Comte de Bethune entered the salon, and was presented to Lady and Lord Scamper, by his daughter; he put on all his courtly graces, to which the lady replied with becoming politeness, while her lord shook him by the hand, and repeated, "*Bong jour! bong jour!*—I say, ma'amselle, does the old boy speak English?" asked Lord Scamper, in what was meant to be a whisper, but which was audible to every one in the room.

Cecile replied in the negative, and saw, with dismay, the angry glance with which her father regarded Lord Scamper; but his lordship concluding that, because Comte de Bethune did not *speak* English, he could not understand it, said,

"Well, well, perhaps it's all for the best, for the old one looks so devilish grumpy, that most probably, if we could comprehend each other, we should soon come to a misunderstanding;" a probability, in which, notwithstanding its *Irishism*, she fully agreed.

Lady Scamper put on her most insinuating smiles, and most amiable manner, in conversing with Comte de Bethune, which her husband observing, he turned to Cecile, and said, "Only look at Janet; she's taking in the old boy just as she used to

hoax me before we were married. I'll lay five to two, that if he said the moon's made of green cheese, she'd swear to it, now that she's set her mind on pleasing him; that's her way, but it's only lately I have found it out. Why, hang me, if the old boy does not swallow it all; look how sweet he looks, like an old monkey with a piece of sugar."

Cecile felt a strong inclination to laugh, but a sense of propriety restrained her; and assuming a grave air, she endeavoured to divert Lord Scamper's attention to some other point.

In answer to her inquiries, if their hotel was comfortable, he burst out into a loud laugh, "Comfortable! comfortable! why, miss,—or ma'amselle, as I ought to say, though both mean the same thing,—as far as I can find, comfort, or comfortable, are things unknown in France. Why, would you believe it, that having only one small chest of drawers in my room which could not hold half my things, I wanted to get a second; and not liking to ask Janet, who hates trouble, to interpret for me, I referred to the dictionary, and looked over it for above an hour for chest of drawers. But not finding the word, I bethought me of looking for the two words separately, which I soon found, and I joined them, and wrote on a piece of paper, *poitrine de caleçon*. No sooner did my insolent *laquais de place* read it, than he burst out laughing in my face, and tried to persuade me that *poitrine* only meant a human chest, and *caleçons* the drawers that we men wear. I said they meant every kind of chest, and had to kick him down stairs for denying it."

Lady Scamper at length took her leave, handed to her carriage by the Comte de Bethune, and followed by her lord, who repeated "*Bong jour, ma'amselle; bong jour;*" giving a ludicrous imitation of the courtly bows of the comte.

When Cecile met her father at dinner, he expressed his approbation of Lady Scamper; he pronounced her *une femme de bon goût, avec beaucoup de savoir vivre;* but her husband was a savage, a vulgarian, who violated *les convenances et la bienséance* every moment, like the generality of his countrymen, and with whom it was impossible a well-bred woman, like Lady Scamper, could be otherwise than unhappy.

CHAPTER XXX.

"Rien ne donne de la reconnaissance pour un homme qu'on n'aime pas, comme le besoin d'en faire un instrument pour se venger de celui dont on n'a pu se faire aimer."

Lady Walmer proceeded as far as Milan, intending to remain there until she had arranged her future plans. A few days after her arrival, she met the Marchese Buondelmonte, with whom she had been acquainted in England two seasons before, and who having recognised her, hastened to offer his services to do the honours of his native city.

Having seen her one of the leading persons in the fashionable circles in London, he was too happy to present her to some of the most distinguished of his acquaintances; and though she informed him that her recent widowhood precluded her mixing in general society, she yielded acquiescence to his assembling at her hotel a select circle of the *haut ton* of Milan; who found *la belle et riche veuve* so much to their tastes, that she became *fêté* at every side, and the object of general admiration.

As there is no English minister at Milan, and few of our wandering country people stay there longer than a few days *en passant*, Lady Walmer's history was unknown there, and she received all the attentions to which she might have laid claim previous to her *esclandre*. The high tone of fashion about her, the ease and elegance of her manners, her personal beauty, and her large fortune, rendered her an idol with the Milanese. Many of the principi, duchi, marchesi, and conti, attracted by her beauty, became fixed in their attentions by the fame of her wealth, which was exaggerated to more than four times its real amount; and Penelope had not more suitors when the return of Ulysses relieved her from their importunities, than had the gay and blooming widow. But, unlike Penelope, she was more inclined to weave than undo the web that occupied her. She had a smile and *mot aimable* for each of her adorers, and anticipated with pleasure the triumph of showing them in her chains to Lord Heatherfield, *if* he should come; and if he came not,—which she had lately accustomed herself to think possible,

—why then—she had only to select a husband from out the crowd of her admirers, and settle at Milan, as principessa or duchessa, establish herself as the leader of an exclusive circle, which should rival that of London, and be as brilliant and as—happy—as ere she had known Lord Heatherfield. After all, London was not the *only* place where beauty and fashion met the meed of applause, and Milan had many *agrémens*.

So reasoned Lady Walmer; who had lately made considerable progress in that practical philosophy which teaches the enjoyment of the good within reach, as preferable to regrets for that which is unattainable.

The letter from Lord Heatherfield, explanatory of his sentiments, which had been forwarded to her to Milan, confirmed her in her new philosophy; and she determined to change her name as soon as she could leave off the external trappings of mourning. She engaged the Palazzo Serbeloni for some months, and filled it with a train of domestics suitable to her station and fortune. The privacy which she had affected to *afficher* on first arriving at Milan, was soon exchanged for the splendour of a *maison montée;* and her dinners and *soirées* became the focus of attraction to the *élite* of the society at Milan.

Among the adorers who aspired to win the smiles of *la belle veuve*, Il principe Romano was the most distinguished. Handsome, well-mannered, of a noble family, and said to possess a large fortune, his attentions at first gratified her vanity, and ended by becoming necessary to her pleasures. He lived *en prince;* his palazzo was one of the finest at Milan; his equipage the most brilliant on the corso; and his expenditure so lavish, that only a princely revenue could support it. He attached himself to Lady Walmer with a pertinacity that soon banished less persevering admirers from competing with him for her hand; and he urged his suit with such *empressement*, that she had consented to accept him for a husband, ere yet he had passed the accustomed probation of a lover.

His impatience to call her his, flattered her vanity; and, compared with the indifference of Lord Heatherfield, excited afresh in her selfish mind the most vindictive feelings towards the latter, and anxious desire to humiliate him. What more effectual method could be adopted than that of linking her fate with another? then,—and only then,—would he become sensible of the treasure he had lost.

So argued Lady Walmer; for, notwithstanding all the proofs of indifference she had received from Lord Heatherfield, her egregious vanity blinded her to the extent of it.

Her engagement with the Principe Romano, soon acquired all the publicity which his declaration could give it; and a crowd of Milanese nobility, the relations, or connexions, of her future husband, flocked around *la belle veuve*. She still remained firm to her intention, of not marrying until the year of her widowhood was expired, although il principe warmly and repeatedly urged her to abridge the period of his misery.

There was more truth in his last phrase than is often to be found in similar ones; for, if not in positive misery, the mind of her affianced husband was in any state rather than that of ease, and never did a lover look forward with more impatience to the nuptial hour, than did Il Principe Romano.

Expensive habits,—indulged, until they had entailed on him the most serious pecuniary embarrassments,—had led him to the spendthrift's fatal resource—the gaming-table; and there, the embarrassments he sought to retrieve soon became positive ruin. He had expended his last thousand of ready money, mortgaged his estates and palazzo, to their full value, and exhausted the generosity of friends, and the patience of creditors, when Lady Walmer arrived at Milan, and was pointed out to him as the Eldorado, that was to restore him to wealth and splendour. His fine person, and distinguished manners, were viewed by his friends and self as marketable commodities to be bartered for the thousands and tens of thousands of *l'anglaise;* and all his friends, most of whom were his creditors also, were as anxious for the completion of his marriage, and from the same motives, as he himself could be. Unlike our own country people, though all Milan were aware of the ruin of Il Principe Romano, not a person breathed it to Lady Walmer. It was not made the subject of conversation, nor was there a single wager made on the *pour et contre* of the marriage taking place, nor did she receive a single anonymous letter, from his enemies, to warn her.

This may seem improbable, but is, nevertheless, true, for Italians have not only less malice, but more indolence than the English.

Lady Walmer had so little affection for her affianced husband, that, had she doubted his wealth, she would have broken through her engagements with him. But, to prevent the possibility of suspicion, many of the friends to whom he was already deeply indebted, feeling his marriage to be their last chance of payment, came forward, with more calculation than generosity, to advance him temporary loans; so that his profusion might have deceived wiser persons than Lady Walmer into a belief that his wealth far exceeded her own.

The interested friends, who furnished the means for supporting his expenses, were most impatient for the completion of his marriage, and urged him on the subject, with quite as much warmth, if with less gentleness, than he urged Lady Walmer.

Matters were in this state, and *la belle veuve*, had exchanged her sables for grey, when one night that she was at the opera, with one or two ladies of the highest distinction at Milan, and attended by Il Principe, she saw a party of English enter the opposite box, and recognised in them Lord and Lady Arden. She felt her cheeks blush their deepest die, as she saw Lady Arden level an opera glass at her; and then turn with an air of astonishment to the rest of the party to communicate the discovery. In an instant every glass in the box was levelled at her; she saw, or fancied she could see, the malicious smiles and contemptuous looks of each of the individuals, and felt ready to sink into the earth beneath their scornful glances.

A thousand fears rushed through her mind; too well did she know the characters of Lady Arden and some of those who were with her, to admit of her doubting that the whole of her history, painted in the darkest shades which malice could give it, would be laid before her Milanese friends, if they came in contact with that lady, or the party who were travelling with her: and that they would come in contact, she had more than a presentiment, from her knowledge of Lady Arden's partiality to foreigners, which would induce her, if not previously acquainted with any of the Milanese, to bring letters of introduction to some of the most illustrious amongst them.

The Principessa Barberini, who sat next her, having observed the rudeness with which the English in the opposite box continued to gaze at them, observed to Lady Walmer, that her compatriots did not appear to be well-bred; adding, "I hope that milady Arden is not amongst them; for, before I left home, letters of introduction from my friend La Contessa Guache, were sent me by Lady Arden, and, as I own La Guache many kindnesses, must repay them to the persons she presents to me."

Here then was a confirmation of Lady Walmer's worst fears! In a few hours her story, with all the exaggerations that a malicious disposition and *spirituelle* mind could give them, would be made known, and she would most probably find herself deserted by her Milanese friends, who, like all Italians, have a great dread of scandal; because it is unknown amongst them, though they dread not those peculiarities which excite it, if not in all other countries, at least in our's.

In Italy, where certain sins—visited with an irretrievable loss of caste in England—are viewed without exciting any suspicion or severity of animadversion, they cannot understand that similar errors call down disgrace on the offenders in our country, which, considering it as the land of political liberty, they believe must be equally that of liberty in manners. Hence, when they see, as frequently occurs, some English Paria universally cut by her compatriots, they look on her with dread, because they cannot imagine, that for merely doing that which they do without concealment or reproach, she could be so severely punished. They therefore conclude, that her crimes must be ignominious to merit such ostracism, and they draw off from her in alarm.

Lady Walmer had seen enough of them to be aware of the existence of this peculiarity; and shrank in dismay from being exposed to their *naïve* desertion. Il Principe, too, would *he* still adhere to his intention of marrying her? How provoking that Lady Arden should have arrived at such a crisis, as if on purpose to defeat all her projects and triumphs! All this, and much more, passed through the mind of Lady Walmer as she sat with glowing cheeks and burning eyes, writhing beneath the levelled glasses of the opposite box; the music, excellent as it was, sounding discordantly in her ears, and the graceful movements of the dancers, as they seemed to float in air like gigantic flowers borne on the wind, gave her only painful emotions; for her mind was untuned, and pride and shame strove for mastery in her troubled thoughts.

Her lover, if such he might be called, who loved only her wealth, observed the rapid change in her looks and manner; he concluded that she had the fever,—that universal malady in sunny climes,—and the dread that she might die ere marriage entitled him to her fortune, filled him with alarm. He watched every change in her countenance, and not love itself could be more alarmed than was *interest* on this occasion.

"You are ill, dearest!" whispered he, in accents so resembling those of love, that Lady Walmer, who knew nothing of that deity, except through the medium of novels and romances; mistook the ardour of cupidity for that of Cupid. "Let me pray you to leave the opera," continued he; "Ah, cruel that you are, why have you withheld from me the right of watching over you in sickness and in health. You are ill; and by the prejudices of your cold country, I shall be excluded from your sick chamber; have pity on me; let our hands be joined to-morrow at the altar, and then this heart will no longer be torn by a thousand

fears! for then only shall I have the right to be always near you. Do, most beloved! yield to my entreaties: in pity yield, and I will bless you."

All this rhapsody, uttered in the melting liquid sounds of the sweet south, stole on her ear, with a charm which his accents had never before possessed; for opposite to her sat those who might with half-a-dozen words destroy the unsubstantial fabric, to the creation of which she had almost wholly devoted the last few months.

She turned to the Principe, and placing her hand in his, whispered, "It is true, I am ill,—very ill: I consent to be your's to-morrow; but, let it be arranged that the ceremony shall take place at the Principessa Barberini's, and that *she* shall accompany us to Florence, where the ceremony must be performed at the English Minister's.

CHAPTER XXXI.

"L'avenir auquel on fait tant de sacrifices et qui nous en récompense si peu; l'avenir, ce souverain dédaigneux, qui presque toujours prend un autre chemin que celui où on l'attend."

On leaving the Opera, the Prince Romano arranged every thing with his friend, the Princess Barberini, for the ceremony of the ensuing day, and stipulated, that she should accompany the bride to Florence, where the marriage must be celebrated, at the house of the English minister. But to this, his last part of the proposed arrangement, the princess objected; because, independently of her wish not to make a third on such an interesting occasion, she was anxious to remain at Milan, to do the honours to Lady Arden; which was the precise object that Lady Walmer so ardently wished to prevent. Her scruples, however, were over-ruled by the perseverance of the prince, in whose interest it need not be added she took a lively part, when we state that to her husband he was some thousands indebted, and that on this marriage depended his sole chance of payment.

Lady Walmer felt something stronger than a *mauvaise honte* when she returned to her home, and had to announce to her *femme-de-chambre* the preparations necessary to be made for

the departure of the morrow, and *why* that departure was to take place; but it was some relief to her that her *femme-de-chambre* was an Italian, and totally unacquainted with her past history. Having given the necessary orders, she sought her pillow, her mind agitated by contending emotions.

In spite of her heartlessness, the past rose up before her; for there are periods when even the most unfeeling are forced to own the influence of memory. Her former marriage, contracted with all the pomp and ceremony which attend the unions between persons of high station in England, the host of congratulating friends, the weeping relations, whose tears on such occasions have no bitterness, the splendid preparations, all, all rose up once more before her. *He* who had led her a blushing girl to the altar, and who had indulged her wayward fancies, even to satiety, where was he now?—in the grave; and tears, for the first time, followed the reflection. Now, she was in a foreign land, surrounded by strangers, without a single friend on whose fidelity she could count; pledged to contract a marriage with a man she loved not, ere yet more than a few months had passed since the grave closed over the husband of her youth; compelled to this indecorous haste, by the degrading fear of the disclosure of her history; and shunned, and pointed at with the finger of contempt by her compatriots;—here was food for reflection, even to madness! and she writhed in agony under the infliction. Then came the thought, that had she married Lord Heatherfield, in how different a situation might *he* have placed her! and bitter feelings came with the thought; for pride, wounded pride, with all its scorpion stings, pierced afresh her bosom at the recollection of his indifference. No! after all, she had no resource but to marry Prince Romano; fresh arrivals of English would continually expose her to the same danger to which Lady Arden had subjected her; and though she had hitherto escaped being compromised by the slander-loving propensities of her compatriots, she could not hope to continue so fortunate much longer. She felt she was now an outcast from her native land, and on the point of forging chains that would ever keep her from it. Tears flowed; but, like all those she had ever shed, they came from no pure source, for in self, self alone, was their spring; and they who have never wept for others, find the tears that selfishness extorts, oppress rather than relieve the bitterness of their feelings.

Hitherto, Lady Walmer had never reflected on her own situation, except with a view of seeking to remedy it; and had never allowed herself to dwell on the conduct that had led to it,

except to regret the effects, without repenting the cause. Conscience, that most true friend or reproachful enemy, had hitherto slumbered in her breast; and though she knew not its powers, she dreaded its awaking, and soothed it by all the soporifics that vanity and selfishness could administer. But, like the slumbers produced by opiates, from which the wretched patient awakes, his sufferings aggravated, and his nerves more shattered, conscience, though she may remain inert for awhile, at last starts from her torpor with fearful vigour, never more to sleep; and inflicts those deadly wounds to which religion alone can apply a balm;—happy is the sufferer who knows how to seek it.

It was not until the first dawn of day had beamed on the horizon, that sleep visited the wearied eyelids of Lady Walmer, and when it did, the painful thoughts that had occupied her mind for the last few hours, were again present to her imagination, with all the vividness that dreams sometimes possess. Now she advanced to the hymeneal altar with Lord Walmer, surrounded by approving friends, her heart filled with joyful anticipations of the future, and content with the present; all the affection she had felt, or fancied she felt for Lord Walmer, when she bestowed her hand on him, was once more revived; and the indifference afterwards experienced towards the husband of some years, formed no part of her recollection of the lover and bridegroom of that day. Free from sin or shame, admired, beloved, and cherished, with buoyant spirits and footsteps light as air, she fancied herself led from the altar, to the splendid equipage that awaited her. She felt the pressure of Lord Walmer's hand, affectionately returned it—and awoke —to find it all a dream; and to remember, with bitterness of heart, that that hand which her's, in sleep, seemed to press a moment before, was mouldering in an untimely grave, in that native land from which she was an exile.

Who has not felt the bitterness of awaking from dreams, which have given back happiness, that never again can be our's? when dear, familiar voices, hushed in the silence of death, have again sounded in our ears, and lips, that are now mouldering in the grave, have again smiled on and blessed us. But when remorse, that never-dying worm, which preys upon the heart, is added to grief, then, indeed, is the bitterness complete; and this was the pang that the rich, the beautiful, and still youthful Lady Walmer felt, as she groaned aloud, and pressed her hand in agony to her burning brow, to mitigate its throbbings. Yet, in a few hours, she was to become a bride; —again was to approach the altar, and with one whom she

could not conceal from herself she did not love, the native of a different country, and the follower of a different religion. But this last objection to their union, unhappily, weighed least heavily of the three on her mind; because, hitherto, though professing a faith, her actions, and, alas! her thoughts, were little in harmony with its divine precepts.

While in this tone of mind, the Prince Romano's habits and ideas appeared to her so dissimilar to those to which she had once been accustomed, that she shrank back affrighted from the anticipation of what her future lot might be with him, and passionately blamed her own precipitancy in consenting to so hasty a marriage. "It was now, however, too late to reflect;" that phrase so often employed by those who feel that they are on the verge of doing something which their reason cannot defend, yet promote its fulfilment, by cheating themselves into a belief that it is too late to avert it.

What would the Milan world say, were she to break off or postpone the marriage at the moment she had consented to its celebration? The opinion of the Milan world, as that of the London world formerly had been, was now made the arbiter of her actions on this momentous occasion, and to conciliate this imaginary tribunal, she silenced that unerring one within her own breast,—the voice of conscience; and again prepared to repeat at the altar those vows of love that the lips might pronounce, but to which the heart gave no echo.

She arose feverish and unrefreshed, and was submitting to, rather than performing, the duties of the toilette, when a note was brought her from the Principessa Barberini, suggesting the propriety of asking one of the newly arrived English milors to be present at the marriage, that, in the absence of all Lady Walmer's relatives or friends, some one of her compatriots might be a witness to the ceremony.

The note fell from the trembling hands of Lady Walmer, and shame dyed her cheeks as she thought of the inevitable consequences of a compliance with the proposal of the Principessa.

She wrote a hurried note to say, that by no means would she consent to having any English person at the marriage; and then prepared herself with all possible haste for the ceremony.

Every moment seemed an hour to her while she anxiously waited the coming of the Prince Romano. Something she felt might yet prevent the marriage taking place, and then she would be again disgraced,—and once more she revolved what would

those Milanese associates whom she now denominated the world, think of her?—that world of whose very existence, a few months before, she was utterly ignorant.

The prince came at the appointed hour, and seemed to have all a lover's impatience to lead her to the altar. He observed not the tremulous agitation of his bride, or if he did, attributed it to some feeling more flattering to his vanity than the real one would have been, had it been declared; but both were deceiving and deceived, and though conscious of the deception they were mutually practising, each expected to receive good faith and affection at the hands of the other.

The marriage ceremony, according to the rites of the Romish church, having been performed at the Princess Barberini's, that lady and the bride entered the travelling carriage of the latter, when, followed by that of the bridegroom, in which he was accompanied by the Prince Barberini, the party set out for Florence.

The reflections of the bride were far from being agreeable during the journey, and she anticipated the meeting with the English minister at Florence with painful embarrassment. She had known him in London, on terms of more than ceremonious acquaintance, and his wife had been one of the three hundred friends whom Lady Walmer, as a woman of fashion, counted on her visiting list. Their former intimacy rendered the present meeting very embarrassing, but it was unavoidable, and therefore she must bear it with outward calm, whatever might be her internal feelings.

Arrived at Florence, the minister was written to, and the next day named for the performance of the ceremony.

The Princess Romano, as we must now call Lady Walmer, felt the deep blush of shame cover her cheeks, when she was ushered into the presence of the minister, whose cold reception of her marked his knowledge of her past conduct, and disapproval of the indecent haste with which she had formed her present union, ere yet eight months had elapsed since the discovery of her indiscretion, in England, and only six since she had become a widow. Her eyes fell beneath the grave glance of his, and it was a relief to her when the ceremony was over, that she might escape from his rebuking presence; but ere she could accomplish this point, the Princess Barberini, who was well acquainted with the English minister and his wife, turned to him and said, she must introduce him to her *dolce amica*, who, though his countrywoman, she saw he did not know. Nothing could be more mal-apropos than this proposal. The

minister bowed and tried to say something civil, while the bride's confusion and wounded pride became nearly insupportable, as she coldly courtsied to his civilities.

"Where is madame?" continued the Princess Barberini, addressing the minister; "ah! I guess she has not yet left her chamber; I know she is apt to be late of a morning: but may I not go to her, for I shall be *au désespoir*, if I leave Florence without seeing her; and, besides, I am dying to present her my new friend,"—taking the bride's hand—"who is too charming not to be beloved by madame, the moment she is known to her."

Even the minister pitied the visible emotion of the new-made wife at this speech, and he hastened to say, that his wife had been absent from Florence for some days, and would not return for a week.

The bridal party then withdrew; three of them unconscious that the fourth was nearly sunk to the earth by contending feelings of shame and pride; or that the bride and the minister had once been well acquainted.

CHAPTER XXXII.

"La société est souvent plus sévère pour l'oubli des convenances que pour l'oubli des devoirs."

We left Lord Heatherfield in Wales, slowly recovering from the effects of his wound, attended by his friend Desbrow, whose unceasing care administered not more to his bodily than to his mental comfort.

The letter having been dispatched to Lady Walmer, in which he declared his renunciation of her hand, his mind gradually assumed its natural tone: it seemed as if a fearful load was removed from it, and now the image of Emily reigned alone. Still his love was without hope, for though he knew she still thought of him with tenderness, could he flatter himself into the belief, that after the weakness and vacillation he had betrayed, she would confide her happiness to his keeping, or that she would bestow her hand on one whom she could no longer respect.

Desbrow interposed the shield of his firmness of character between Heatherfield and his besetting sin, a dread of the opinions of the clique he denominated the world. Its false principles and conventional tactics still influenced him, and instead of relying on the only safe monitor, conscience, he referred to society for a criterion by which to govern his actions; and hence found himself in continual opposition with moral duties as well as with his own feelings.

Conversing on this subject one day, he asked Desbrow, if the circle who had witnessed his attentions in former times to Lady Walmer, would not severely censure his desertion of her.

"Why, as to that," replied Desbrow, "the probability is, that long ere this, that circle has ceased to remember the existence of either of you,—one half having pronounced, that to marry her would be to confirm every evil report respecting her, —and the other, *vice versâ*.—Believe me, they have taken up some newer, and therefore more interesting topic, and will recur to her no more, until some other attachment on her part recalls her to their recollection."

"Spare me, my dear Desbrow," said Heatherfield; "indeed you wrong Lady Walmer; she is incapable of the levity of conduct you attribute to her. Would that I could flatter myself that some other and more fortunate attachment might replace the unhappy one she formed for me; for then, I should have less self-reproach and chagrin than at present."

"It is your vanity, and not your reason, that makes you believe in the stability of the attachment you have inspired," replied Desbrow; "know you not, that '*L'amour-propre est toujours le premier compère de celui qui cherche à le duper.*' It is thus we all cheat ourselves. Lady Walmer will form another attachment,—if such selfish preferences can be so called,—and will prove to the world, that her despair at your desertion is much less profound, and of shorter duration, than you are at present willing to believe."

Heatherfield replied not, though he was still sceptical; for vanity, no less than a better opinion of Lady Walmer than she deserved, made him believe that her attachment to him was sincere and unchangeable.

The period now drew near, that had been fixed on for Desbrow to seek his promised bride in France; he looked forward to it, with all the impatience of a lover, for his affection for Cecile had increased rather than diminished during their separation, kept alive as it was by a constant correspondence, that made her mind and character still better known to him, and still

more admired. He could have wished his friend to accompany him to Paris, but he repressed the desire, because he dreaded that Lady Walmer might come there, and again try to shake his resolution, while to England he felt certain she would not come, as the fear of meeting former friends, and a presentiment of the treatment she might experience from them, would deter her. The same idea had found place in the mind of Heatherfield, though he, from delicacy, refrained from expressing it: added to which, he felt a pleasure in remaining in the same country that held Emily, and had a latent hope, that she might learn from the newspapers, those praters of the whereabouts of lords and ladies, that he was *not* on the continent.

Desbrow remained with Heatherfield until the last moment fixed for his departure for France had arrived, and then took an affectionate leave of him, promising, that when Cecile had become his wife, he would use all his influence with her, to represent to Lady Emily, Heatherfield's unceasing attachment to her, and disentanglement from Lady Walmer.

"I am persuaded," said Desbrow, "that when Lady Emily knows that no guilt has been either intended, or perpetrated by you, since you first sought her hand, and that hypocrisy is not to be added to the weakness, with which alone you are chargeable, she will regard your conduct in a totally different point of view; and if, by an avoidance of Lady Walmer, you convince the world of the falsity of its conclusions respecting you, her family may be brought to receive you again as her suitor."

There was happiness even in the thought of this; and Heatherfield clung to it, as a shipwrecked mariner clings to the last spar or rope, that offers him a chance of life.

The solitude in which he found himself after the departure of Desbrow, became every day less irksome; he had now ample time to commune with his own mind; and the emptiness of his past pursuits, and the fallacy of his former modes of reasoning and acting, now stood exposed in their natural colours. No longer in contact with that artificial circle, whose opinions had hitherto governed him, he learned to look on its applause or censure with indifference, and to examine his own motives by the most unerring of all judges, conscience. He passed his mornings in riding over his estate, examining into the condition of his tenantry, relieving the necessities of the indigent, and planning such improvements of his castle and grounds, as would give employment to them. He found much to disapprove, as the late lord had not for many years visited his property in Wales, and the resident agent was, by age and personal infir-

mities, prevented from performing the arduous duties of his situation.

Hence, many abuses had crept in, under the management of the subaltern to whom the trust was confided; and Heatherfield set about remedying them, with a zeal directed by prudence and judgment. His evenings were given up to reading, for which he found his passion daily increase; but often was the volume laid down, while his thoughts dwelt on Emily, and he would form bright visions of the future, in which she was the presiding goddess who was to realize them. Then, would come the fearful recollection of her delicate health, and she would appear to his mental eye as he had last seen her, with faded cheeks and wasted form, but more lovely in *his* sight, than when health's brightest roses bloomed on her face, and her rounded contour might have served as a model for the graces. It seemed to him as if he had never loved her till now; and the consciousness of his own unworthiness made him doubly anxious to become all that could render him more deserving the treasure which he aspired to possess. So much had his passion for Emily increased since he had seen her at the inn, that he no longer dared to contemplate the possibility of not calling her his; and yet the hope of such happiness was too often chilled by a fear which is ever inseparable from true love, but to which, in his peculiar situation, he had but too much cause to give way. He might now be said to indulge in the luxury of solitude; and he found its charms grow upon him every day. Reading and reflection strengthened the tone of his mind; and a self-examination, to which he accustomed himself, taught him to correct the defects that had hitherto sullied his character.

The Lord Heatherfield of Wales was as unlike the Arlington of a few months before, as if they had not been the same person. No longer influenced by the false maxims of a conventional state of society, which teaches not to correct, but to conceal, vices, he every day became more worthy of the affection of her who had loved him, not for the qualities he possessed, but for those for which her own goodness and purity of mind had led her to give him credit. The fame of his steadiness, generosity, and charity, was soon spread through his neighbourhood, and gained him the respect and good-will of all. He felt that his presence was of essential value to his dependants, and that a personal acquaintance had drawn closer the bonds which united them. While dispensing happiness, and encouraging industry and good conduct, he often reflected how different his fate might have been, as an exile in a foreign land, shrinking from his countrymen,

and pointed at as the husband of one he could not love, and whose conduct had forfeited his respect.

But while rejoicing in his escape from this ignoble thraldom, and its miserable consequences, he thought, with deep regret, of the evils Lady Walmer's ill-starred attachment to him, had entailed on her. With the self deception natural even to the least vain, he magnified the depth of this attachment, until he trembled for its probable results on her health and peace of mind; and while she thought only of amusing herself, or of recovering that station in society in a foreign land which she had lost in her own, he pictured her to himself as pining in solitude, the barbed arrow of disappointed affection rankling in her breast, until he felt the liveliest pity for her supposed sufferings, though a warmer feeling he could not indulge towards her, Lady Emily Vavasour being the sole occupant of his *heart*.

Having received a letter, announcing the death of his steward at Heatherfield Castle, he found himself compelled to quit his solitude in Wales, which he left with a regret that, he little fancied, on arriving there, he should ever have experienced on quitting it. He left it, too, followed by the regrets and good wishes of all, for his conduct during his stay there had "bought golden opinions from all sorts of men." The poor blessed him, the rich respected him, and all agreed in thinking they had indeed found a friend in their new landlord, who would judge with his own eyes, instead of seeing only through the interested and prejudiced ones of some griping steward.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

"La société est appuyée sur de fausses bases qui s'écroulent chaque jour d'une manière sensible. L'égoisme et la cupidité sont les ressorts secrets de toutes les actions; ils règnent dans les emplois, dans le commerce, dans les familles; chacune d'elles a resserré son cercle en disant: 'hors d'ici, que m'importe.' Aussi, plus de lien entre les individus, plus d'enthousiasme pour le bonheur de la société, plus de morale enfin; car aimer, c'est se dévouer pour les autres. Hors de là, il n'y a plus de félicité publique à espérer."

The fortune bequeathed to Cecile de Bethune, by Lord Ayrshire, made a considerable change in the position of that young lady; though under age, she was entitled to receive the

interest of it until she married, or reached her twenty-first year; and this acquisition of wealth not only gave the means of present comfort, but suggested to the minds of the Comte de Bethune, and his oracle, the Duchesse de Montcalm, the advantage to be derived from retaining the heiress and her heritage in their power as long as possible; or, if marry she must, of bestowing her hand and fortune on some Frenchman of high birth, with whom she would be fixed in France, and from whose residence in their own country her family would derive a vast accession of importance.

The Comte de Bethune had never cordially approved the projected marriage of his daughter with Desbrow, but his own poverty, and the wealth of the suitor, had silenced his objections. Indeed, he hardly dared avow to the friends who had acted like the tenderest parents to her, that his principal objection was, that Desbrow was an Englishman—yet so it was. But, in addition to this, he saw, notwithstanding Desbrow's forbearance on political subjects, enough to convince him that he was what he, the Comte, most detested on earth, a Liberal,—a character he looked on with much the same horror with which sober-minded people regard a Radical. Desbrow had never assented to his opinions, though he forbore to oppose them; and the Comte, who thought that all who were not with, were against him, looked on him as an enemy. Now, that Cecile was rich, and that her fortune would enable them to resume a little of the former splendour of the family, it became the first wish of his heart to prevent the marriage; and, judging of his daughter's feelings by his own, he concluded that her attachment to Desbrow was not of so exclusive a nature as to preclude her happiness, were the marriage to be broken off. People with unfeeling hearts, and frivolous minds, frequently contemplate, or commit actions, from which the greatest unhappiness may result, not from any malice in their natures, but because they are too apt to judge of the feelings of others by their own. The Comte de Bethune would have shrunk from the idea of wounding the peace of his daughter, could he have formed a notion of the depth or sincerity of her attachment to Desbrow; but being incapable of any deep sentiment of affection himself, he had no clue by which he could discover her's; and possessing himself an obstinate disposition, he was more disposed to attribute her attachment to her affianced husband to obstinacy, of which he knew much, than to love, of which he knew—nothing. He, therefore, looked at his dislike to the projected marriage, and her adherence to it, as a cause of obstinacy *versus* obstinacy, in

which he wished to gain the verdict. Various were the consultations between him and the Duchesse de Montcalm on the subject; the latter suggested the plan of presenting to Cecile some of the innumerable Ducs, Marquis's, Comtes, Viscounts, and Barons, who wanted, *not* a wife, but a marriage portion, and to whom that of Cecile would be an irresistible temptation.

"It is quite impossible," said la Duchesse, "that Cecile can be such a simpleton as to prefer this Englishman, whom you represent to me as being *gauche* and *brusque*, to any of our young men of fashion; though, I confess, those whom I have hitherto thrown in her way, have not seemed to make a favourable impression on her. But the truth is, she is *un peu originale*, a fault common to all who have been brought up in barbarous England; and though every means ought to be tried to bring her to reason, I fear we shall never make anything of her."

The Comte had a presentiment of the same sort; for, though Cecile's conduct was as dutiful and respectful as possible, he saw that she had a natural firmness of character, or obstinacy, as he termed it, which led her to adhere to any resolution once formed; and he had also observed, that she pertinaciously put aside any insinuations thrown out against Desbrow (for he had tried this plan), and invariably referred to England as her future home.

The Comte de Bethune increased his establishment on his daughter's acquisition of fortune,—a young Parisian *femme-de-chambre* was provided for Cecile, and two *laquais*, and an aid in the *cuisine*, were added to the *ménage*; while a pair of fresh, high-stepping horses, and a new carriage, replaced the former equipage. All was bustle and gaiety in the hotel,—a gaiety that ill accorded with the grief Cecile felt for the death of Lord Ayrshire, which opened afresh the ill-healed wounds so recently occasioned by the loss of his wife. The total want of sympathy between her father and self on this subject was destructive to that feeling of affection which she wished, and tried to encourage for him. Often did she accuse herself of an unnatural and reprehensible coldness towards her only parent, and resolve to force herself to feel towards him as she ought; but the effort was always chilled by some display of prejudices against her adopted country, or some fresh proof of selfishness, that banished every thing like affection, leaving only a sense of duty to supply its place.

Cecile could neither be persuaded nor forced to leave the seclusion of the hotel, during the first weeks after the death of

Lord Ayrshire. In vain, the Duchess de Montcalm assailed her by turns, with entreaties and sarcasms; in vain, her father attempted to interpose his authority; she was not to be moved. Precedents of *les usages de Paris* were quoted to her without number, all "*les convenances*" were dwelt on, and how long people were expected to feel, or be *supposed* to feel, grief, was accurately computed. And it was pronounced that as at the end of six weeks, after the death of a parent, a son or daughter might go into the gayest society, without any imputation being cast upon their filial, or want of filial affection; for a less degree of consanguinity, as many days' seclusion would be quite sufficient. *Le Livre de Deuil*, sent from the mercer's, had not specified the mourning for the precise case in question, but as bombasine could not be worn for so distant a relative, and this article serves as a point of etiquette in the toilette, that always regulates Parisian grief, it was absurd to shut oneself up, and all Paris would think it affectation and *mauvais goût*, and say it was *l'exagération anglaise*, which was *si mauvais ton*. All this reasoning, if reasoning it might be called, failed to conquer Cecile's determination to seclude herself during the first weeks of her loss; and her deep and uncontrollable regret for her dear departed friend, Lord Ayrshire, was borne in solitude, and solaced by religion. This excellent man was as bitterly wept by her, in the daughter's mourning,—which, in spite of all the Duchess de Montcalm's and her father's angry representations, she had persevered in wearing for him,—as was ever parent by the fondest child. Indeed, all that Cecile had as yet experienced of her real parent, made her but the more deeply mourn for the *dead*, who had, from her infancy, so fondly and ably supplied the place of the living; and she turned with a feeling, as nearly allied to anger as her gentle nature and sense of duty would admit, from the heartless arguments and frivolous consolations that were held out to her.

It was after a vain effort to induce her to go to a *soirée*, at the Duchess de Montcalm's, that her father, shrugging up his shoulders—his usual mode of displaying his displeasure—emphatically remarked that she was "*une véritable anglaise*, and that the English had no philosophy."

"When I lost your mother," he continued, "do you suppose that I shut myself up to weep? What could I have gained by such a silly proceeding? Sore eyes, a bad head-ache, and a red nose, three things of which all people must have a horror. Would the entailment of three such inflictions on myself have brought back the Countess de Bethune, or availed her aught in

the mansions of the blessed? Certainly not: so with the philosophy that distinguishes my countrymen, I triumphed over my grief, and bore it not only as a man, but as a—Frenchman. You look surprised," (which poor Cecile certainly did) "but this is only one of many proofs which I could give you of my strength of character and philosophy. I remember when writing to your friend Lady Ayrshire, all the particulars of Madame de Bethune's death, and having to repeat her dying words, bequeathing you to the charge of her cousin, my philosophy became for a moment in danger; I felt a painful sensation in my throat, and a moisture springing to my eyes, but I reflected on the inevitable consequences of an indulgence of this impulse; the sore eyes, head-ache, and, above all, the red nose, recurred to my memory, and I swallowed my chagrin and completed my letter, without having omitted a single particularity, or shed a single tear. On reading it over, it occurred to me that your friends, who were much too English to comprehend my strength of mind and philosophy, might form an injurious opinion of my conjugal feelings, were I not to give some indication of grief more than mere words; so I dipped my fingers into a glass of water, and sprinkled it over the parts of the letter the most touching, which gave it the appearance of having been bedewed by my tears. By these means," added the Count, at once proudly and self-complacently, "I satisfied your friends of my grief, and saved myself from the infirmities of which I have such a dread."

Cecile sat listening to this disclosure with equal astonishment and disgust, but the satisfaction of the narrator was so great that he attributed her silence to respectful admiration; and left her, as he thought, impressed with a high opinion of his philosophy, for which high sounding title she felt disposed to substitute frivolity. The two are often mistaken for each other in France, and if the effects are the same (inducing *insouciance*), we must let them choose the term, the most agreeable to that ruling passion in French natures, *l'amour-propre.*

The Comte de Bethune, finding that he could not persuade his daughter to go into society during the first week of her recent loss, betook himself to his former routine of life, which had been interrupted by his acting as *chaperon* to her. He now found himself received on very different terms in the circles in which he presented himself. The father of a rich young heiress was sure to be fêted on all sides, because every family had a son, brother, nephew, or cousin, to whom the fortune of Mademoiselle de Bethune would be a very desirable

acquisition. In proportion to the respectful consideration with which he found himself treated, became his desire to insure a continuance of it; and each day rendered him more anxious to break off the marriage of his daughter, on which he knew it depended.

The young men at Paris who had hitherto treated him with that *nonchalance* which marks their manner towards those from whom they have nothing to expect, now flocked round him with polite assiduities and respectful deference, while he looked on them with proud complacency, neither too much encouraging nor repelling their attentions.

While the Comte de Bethune was enjoying his lately acquired consideration abroad, his amiable and lovely daughter was passing her hours in solitude at home. By pecuniary liberality to Madame de la Rue, judiciously and delicately administered, she had secured herself from the irksome society of that lady, who was well satisfied to remain in her chamber with her dear Coco and Bijou and the last *Livre de Modes*, during the hours she was supposed to be with Mademoiselle de Bethune. At first she could not comprehend the love of solitude of Cecile, a passion which is of such rare occurrence in France, that it draws on the person who indulges it, as many suspicions as the evil propensities of the suspectors suggest.

But a few weeks daily intercourse with Cecile had taught even the frivolous and gossipping Madame de la Rue, that the amiable girl had nothing to conceal; and propitiated by her generosity, she thought it hard, as she observed, that if Mademoiselle wished to read, draw, practise her music, or work, *alone*, instead of in her company, she might not be permitted to do so: *chacun a son goût*, Mademoiselle liked solitude, which *she* thought the most *triste* thing on earth, except the presence of that *méchante* Madame le Moine, and never wished to be separated from her *cher* Coco and Bijou, who were all the world to her. To be sure, Mademoiselle, it must be owned, was *un peu originale*, *mais*, she was very amiable and generous—generous as a queen,—and therefore *she* should not interrupt her comfort.

The fortune left by Lord Ayrshire to Cecile, was magnified, by rumour, into thrice its actual amount; and as the Duchesse de Montcalm and the Comte de Bethune acquired additional importance from the belief of the immense wealth of the *protégée* of the one, and the daughter of the other, they were unwilling to destroy the illusion of the Parisians. No sooner had Cecile

once more resumed her visits to the Hotel de Montcalm, than the *soirées* of the Duchesse became the resort of all the young men of fashion at Paris, and Cecile the avowed object of their admiration and attention.

Those who, previously to her acquisition of fortune, had scarcely deigned to notice her, or had noticed her, but to comment on her *mise à l'anglaise*, and want of *tournure*, now discovered in her a thousand charms. How many fresh extravagances were entered into by her suitors, on the faith of her thousands, and tens of thousands? each declared himself an Anglomane, on discovering her attachment to her adopted country; and English horses and grooms rose cent. per cent., such was the demand for them, in order to "'witch Cecile's heart by noble horsemanship." That courage, peculiar to Frenchmen, was never more exemplified than in the present case, for many a youth risked his neck on unmanageable horses to win her favour. Each aspirant made certain of success, and wagers were entered down in the clubs at Paris, to a large amount, which displayed as much confidence in the powers of captivation of the candidates for her fortune, as ignorance of the character and feelings of her by whose hand it was to be acquired. Fresh credits were given by the horse-dealers, jewellers, tailors, and other trades-people, through whose artful aid, a dandy, an exquisite, or by whatever name these ephemera choose to designate themselves, is fitted to play his part. Good looks, and an air *distingué*, with an ancient name, could command credit *ad libitum*; while the reverses of these were sent away with cold refusals.

Little did Cecile imagine that she was the subject of conversation and speculation in horse-dealers' yards, and jewellers' and tailors' shops; and equally little did she imagine, that each of the crowd of butterflies who surrounded her, and on whom she deigned not even to bestow a passing thought, considered himself almost sure of winning her. She observed with surprise the alteration in their manners towards her and her father; but she paid so little attention to them, that she soon ceased to remember it.

A pure-minded and well-principled young woman, whose affections are engaged, is often unconscious of the admiration she excites, or if she discerns it, derives but little pleasure from her discovery. In the present instance, however, Cecile was not to be cheated into a belief, that the attentions she was paid were the results of her personal attractions; and therefore, she

received them with a distant politeness, that would have chilled an Englishman, but which discouraged not the more confident and volatile Frenchman.

The letters from Desbrow, which were long and frequent, were the sole consolation of Cecile in the uncongenial circle into which she had been thrown; and finding in that circle no creature with whom she could sympathize, her whole soul opened to the lover, whose letters breathed not only the most devoted attachment, but evinced a similarity of thought and feeling with her own, that still more strongly cemented the ties of affection between them. Her brother she had not yet seen; he was in a distant province with his regiment, which was expected to arrive shortly in Paris, and she looked forward with anxious impatience to meeting him, who was now the sole member of her family from whom she expected sympathy, or freedom from national prejudice.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

"Aye get thee home again! you islanders
Live under such good laws, so mild a sway,
That you are no more fit to dwell abroad
Than is a doting mother's favourite to endure
His first school hardships."

Lord and Lady Vavasour, finding that the health of Lady Emily made such slow progress towards amendment, and judging that her mind was preying on the beautiful but too frail temple that enshrined it, proposed to her to visit the south of France for change of air and scene, and to remain a few weeks at Paris to enjoy the society of her friend Mademoiselle de Bethune. Nothing could be devised more agreeable to Lady Emily than this plan; and the pleasure with which she acceded to it, induced her parents to put it into execution soon after it was formed. Apartments were secured for them at the Hotel de Breteuil, Rue de Rivoli; and the morning after their arrival, a note from Lady Emily prepared Cecile for the happiness of seeing her.

The altered looks of her friend deeply shocked and grieved the sensitive heart of the affectionate Cecile; and to the earnest

request that they might pass as much of their time together as possible, she yielded a ready assent, though she saw her father's brow clouded by dissatisfaction, and anticipated some objections, on his part, to the proposed daily intercourse.

Her anticipations were not falsified; for no sooner did he find himself alone with her, than he told her that he regretted that she had pledged herself to such an unnecessary intimacy, and that he hoped she would break it off gradually. "You must remember, before every other consideration," said the Comte, "that you are French; and that being the daughter of an *émigré*, any extraordinary intimacy with the English will excite disagreeable observations among our compatriots, and subject us to animadversions in a certain high quarter. The English come here, as if to remind us of their ostentatious services in our days of adversity in their country. The Restoration, unhappily, has not, in restoring our rank, given us back the fortunes to support it with suitable dignity; and as we cannot repay their hospitality in a similar style, I confess that all intercourse with them is humiliating and disagreeable to me."

This mode of feeling obligations was so new to the guileless Cecile, that she listened with an astonishment nearly equal to the disgust which it excited in her mind. Now was explained to her that enigma which had frequently puzzled her since her arrival in France, of seeing the English of distinction so coldly received in the circles of the aristocracy of *l'ancien régime* at Paris. She felt however the necessity of being candid and explicit with her father on this subject; and declared to him, that she could not break off her intimacy with her friend, as the very moment that, owing to the delicacy of her health, she most required her kindness and attention, without incurring the odious suspicion of ingratitude, and forfeiting her own self-esteem.

There was something so decided, though respectful, in the tone and manner of Cecile, that her father felt it would be treading on dangerous ground to risk a command, where an entreaty had failed to produce the desired effect. But, when his daughter stated, that while remembering that she was of French origin, she must not forget, that to England, and English kindness, she owed education, years of affectionate kindness, and a large fortune, less valuable in itself than as a proof of the affection of the generous friend who bequeathed it; also, that being affianced to an Englishman, her life would be spent in his country, and therefore she must not be influenced by the prejudices of France,—the Comte could hardly restrain his anger, though he felt that any display of it would be as unavail-

ing as injudicious. He left the salon lest he should betray his emotions, and sought, in solitude, to recover his self-possession.

At an early hour next day, the carriage conveyed Cecile, attended by Madame de la Rue, to the Hotel de Breteuil; and Lady Vavasour, having promised to conduct Mademoiselle to the Hotel de Bethune, *la dame de compagnie* returned alone, leaving Cecile to enjoy a *tête-à-tête* with her young friend, to which both eagerly looked forward. How much had they to communicate! Cecile repressed the expression of the hopes that animated her, now that the period fixed for her marriage drew so near, because she would not pain the feelings of her gentle friend, whose hopes, when to all appearance equally near completion, had been so cruelly blighted. But Emily's nature was too generous, too disinterested, to be gained by the contrast of her friend's prospects with her own,—nay, she was cheered by them, and offered to stay in Paris to accompany her to the altar, saying she knew she should feel happier when the happiness of her friend was secured. Every thought, every feeling, of the two pure-minded and amiable girls, were laid open to each other; and a faint blush played on the cheek of Emily, and a brighter ray sparkled in her eye, when Cecile told her, that Lord Heatherfield, nearly recovered from the effects of his duel, was in England and *alone*. A whole volume was comprised in the last sentence; but when to it was added the information conveyed to Cecile by Desbrow, that Heatherfield still fondly loved, and had never ceased to love her, the amiable and sensitive girl wept tears, in which, for the first time for many months, more of pleasure than of pain was mingled.

"Do not think me weak, dearest Cecile," said Emily, "nor think I weep at the assurance that *he* still loves me; for believe me, that, were he *not alone*, that assurance would give me pain, as he is too dear to me to permit my wishing him to feel a passion that must make him wretched. I weep, because his *solitary* residence in England proves to me, that, though weak and erring, he has not been the guilty creature the world would fain represent him to be; for I know that if he had been the seducer of the unhappy Lady Walmer, he would have offered her the *only* reparation in his power, and would not now be *alone*, in England. It is dreadful, Cecile, to have to weep in secret over the guilt of those we have loved; and though I may never again see Lord Heatherfield, it is comparative happiness to what I have suffered, to learn that he is not steeped in guilt and shame, and to feel that I need not blush I have loved him."

The health of Lady Emily began to improve from the date of this conversation: the society of her friend conveyed a balm to her heart, and Lord and Lady Vavasour marked the renovation in her looks and spirits with grateful delight.

Lord and Lady Scamper soon found their way to the Hotel de Breteuil,—the former, full of grievances and discontent, and the latter, in raptures with Paris and every thing Parisian.

"I'm sorry you're come to this cursed place," was Lord Scamper's first ejaculation, while heartily shaking the hand of Lord Vavasour; "make up your mind to be fleeced; they won't leave you a guinea, for it is cheat! cheat! from the marquis, with all his decorations, down to the shopkeeper, with his contortions and extortions. I've found them out, a little too late,—but better late than never, say I; for though they have done me out of many hundreds, they sha'n't have a single guinea from me again; I keep a sharp look out on them, *now*, I can tell you."

While he was making this boast of his dearly purchased sagacity to Lord Vavasour, accompanied by sundry knowing winks and shrugs, Lady Scamper was detailing the various *agrémens* of Paris to Lady Vavasour.

"It is, indeed, a delightful place—society established on such an agreeable footing."

Here, Lord Scamper overheard her; and, turning round, repeated the words, "Agreeable footing, indeed; I like that—devilish agreeable! They come and dine with you as often as you choose to ask them; but as to letting you have a dinner in return, they never dream of it. A *soirée* at which they all jabber their confounded lingo together, and give you weak black tea, and *l'eau sucrée*, is all I have ever got out of them: and this is what Lady Scamper calls society on an 'agreeable footing!' Beware of their men milliners, Lady Vavasour. What do you think of three and four hundred francs for a *chapeau à plumes*, as they call a bonnet with feathers. "I know some people that they have so well plumed,"—casting a sly look at his wife,—"that if a second year's pin-money had not been advanced, I can pretty well guess what must have happened."

Lady Scamper gave a look of mingled shame and anger at her lord, who replied to it, "It's no use your giving me your angry looks; you know it's all true, and, what's more, you told me you never would buy any more of their jim-cracks; and yet this morning, I caught the *laquais de place* smuggling up two or three band-boxes to your room.—Mind you don't go and

play at the club, Lord Vavasour," continued Lord Scamper; "they'll do you, to a moral certainty, if you neglect my advice. You may play a rubber at the ambassador's,—that is to say, if you can *parley-vous* it,—for all depends on that. Lady Scamper would insist on my learning French; and I have had a master every morning,—a sad dirty beast, who smelt of cigars,—but I could make nothing of him, for, as he did not comprehend two words of English nor I one of French, we were not likely to come to an understanding. I packed him off, and began teaching myself with a dictionary, of which I make a much better hand, and I can now ask for every thing I want, without an interpreter. To be sure, I get into some scrapes, and half the time they keep saying, '*Pardonne*,' '*Plaît-il*,' but I must say they are much more civil than the English are; for make what mistake you will, they never laugh in your face. Lady Scamper would make me go the other night to the Duchesse de Montfort's, and, as I knew I should be asked to play at some of their round games, I got myself up with a few phrases, which I strung together out of the dictionary, and put in my waistcoat pocket. We played, and I won the pool; so I looked at my little vocabulary, and wishing to get the counters, I exclaimed, '*Le gibier est à moi, donnez-moi le poisson!*' They could not make out what I meant, turned up their eyes, shrugged their shoulders, and repeated, '*Pardonne!*' and '*Plaît-il!*' until I was getting into a passion; when Sir Thomas Wilman came up, and demanded, what I meant? Mean, said I, Why I mean, to be sure, that the game is mine, give me the fish, which I've told them ten times in good French, but they pretend not to understand me. Now, I ask you, Lord Vavasour, is not the French for game, *gibier*, and for fish, *poisson?* therefore I was right."

Lady Scamper looked horrified at her obtuse lord's mistakes, while Lord and Lady Vavasour could with difficulty restrain their risible faculties within due bounds; and Lady Emily and Cecile, who were in the recess of the window, could not resist laughing, a transgression of decorum which their position luckily prevented from being observed in the salon.

"There is no sport going on in this country," resumed Lord Scamper; "unless one dignifies with that name, their races in the *Champ-de-Mars*, which are the most complete humbug I ever saw. Only fancy a race course, where the horses run on a hard gravel road, enough to shake them to pieces, while the spectators are on the grass. Then, they are started by a fellow in a gold-laced coat and hat, enough to frighten any horse,

who cries out '*Partez!*' and away they go. Some of the most knowing of the French get English jockeys, and, would you believe it, that when the spectators and betters saw them keeping in their horses, in order to make play at the last, the spooneys imagined that, because they were last in the beginning, they must lose in the end; and so, backed those that were first, and, of course, were done out of their money. Ever since then, they have fancied the horse or horses who are last, *must* win, being totally unable to distinguish the difference between a fresh horse kept in, or a tired one who cannot advance; so they back the latter, regularly expecting up to the last minute that they will stride out, and pass those in advance. When they find they have lost, they are furious: such oaths, such exclamations follow, and all for a few hundred francs.

"They have no Newmarket, no provincial races; no hunting, except a sort of humbug ceremony, which they call by that name, got up for the royal family and their courtiers, which is as little like the real thing as can be well imagined. Cock-fighting they never heard of: only think of that! a pretty sort of a country, indeed, where cock-fighting is unknown: in short, they are a century behind us in civilization; and England —England is the only country where a man can spend his money or his time to satisfaction. The only thing in the shape of sport I have seen, was a quarrel between two old French women; they had a good deal of pluck, and I might have won something by them, if I had had any one to bet with, but the old ones, when I tapped them on the back to encourage them, turned their anger on me, and I was forced to retreat. As to their dinners, hang me, if I have had a passable one since I have been in the country—a morsel of plain, wholesome, nutritious food, it is impossible to get; their mutton is tough, spongy, and flabby; their beef gives me the notion of having been fed on glue; and their eternal *poulardes*, and *dindes aux truffes*, as unmasticable to the teeth as they are indigestible to the stomach, I am sick of seeing. Then their vegetables, tasting of nutmeg and gravy, have lost all their original flavour; and their fish is so disguised by sauces, that it resembles neither fish nor flesh. In short, my days pass without amusement, and when the dinner-hour comes, which in England is always the most agreeable of the twenty-four, I find a repast which may do for those who, like Lady Scamper, are partial to kickshaws, but which disgust me. Their wines, too, are abominable to my taste: their claret is poor weak stuff, no more to be compared to the good strong wine they send us to England, than if it

came not from the same grape. I am positively starved; and were it not for a dinner once now and then at our ambassador's, where I can get a bit of good English mutton, or venison, I could not stand it. And what an absurd custom they have, of the men leaving the dining-room with the women, and so losing the most agreeable part of the evening; for, certainly, when the ladies retire, and that we draw, socially together, round the table, we may be said really to enjoy ourselves. Hang me, if ever if shall adopt this plan in my house, though Lady Scamper says it is the most rational; as if, when a set of men are talking together over their wine, without having to pay compliments and listen to the chit-chat of the women, there is not more chance of rational conversation. In the country, the day's hunting, or shooting, furnishes a never-failing topic of interest, and in London, politics do the same; but here, there is nothing to talk of, but the opera or the spectacle. No! I repeat, England is the only place for a sensible man to live in, and once I get back, hang me, if ever I cross the water again:"

A declaration which made poor Lady Scamper look quite panic-stricken; dreading, however, the continuance of the enumeration of his discontents, after repeated signs, she at length persuaded him to finish their visit.

CHAPTER XXXV.

"Le respect est une barrière qui protège autant un père et une mère qu'un enfant: elle évite à ceux-ci des chagrins, à celui-là des remords."

At this period, the brother of Cecile arrived at Paris, with his regiment, and she hailed his presence with delight. He had all the warmth of manner, and vivacity of his countrymen, with a good breeding and polish, not often to be found in the young men of modern France. His personal beauty was so striking that, united to such agreeable manners, Cecile ceased to wonder that her father was so fond and proud of such a son. His arrival dispersed pleasure through all the household; the old porter sent forth the fumes from his cigar with increased velocity, brushed the court-yard with unusual exac-

titude, and assumed an air of fresh importance every time his young master passed through it. The coachman and his assistant put the stable and its inmates into better order. The *cuisinier* gave some of his *plats les plus recherchés*, and Madame le Moine donned her newest bonnet, with ribbons *à la jardinière*, to present herself before her *cher* Monsieur Auguste, every time he passed through the vestibule.

Auguste was, and most deservedly, a general favourite in the hotel; his gaiety, frankness, and generosity had won the hearts of all; he had a smile, a kind word, or a playful sally, for each of the members of the establishment, and his affectionate attention to his father and sister was unceasing. He could not take up his residence in the Hotel de Bethune, as he was compelled to remain with his regiment at the other side of Paris; but every moment that he could snatch from his military duties was devoted to his family. His *petite sœur*, as he called Cecile, he soon learned to love with all the warmth of his nature: her gentleness, yet decision of character, charmed him, and her power of not only supporting solitude, but of enjoying it, and of submitting to the various *désagrémens* of her *entourage*, excited alike his wonder and esteem. He had not been two days in Paris, ere Cecile feeling all her sisterly affection drawn into animation towards him, had written to Desbrow a glowing description of his mental and personal qualities; adding her conviction that her brother could not fail to win his friendship. All her natural tenderness, which had been chilled by the selfishness, coldness of heart, and national prejudices of her father, now expanded towards her brother. She wondered how she had hitherto known happiness apart from him, and felt as if she owed him a reparation for having so long lived forgetful of his claims on her affection, or only remembering them from a sense of duty. Ever since her acquisition of fortune, she had determined on securing the comfort of her father, by settling half the interest of it on him for his life, and fixing the other half on Auguste, the whole to descend to the latter, on the death of the Comte de Bethune. She knew Desbrow too well to doubt for a moment his ready and perfect acquiescence in this project. He chose me for myself, thought Cecile, when I was without fortune, and I have no feeling of pride to make me shrink from going to him as a portionless bride. She wrote her intentions to Desbrow, who was gratified by this new proof of her confidence in his affection and generosity, and she became in consequence doubly dear to him. It was while Cecile was planning the future comfort and in-

dependence of her father, and that her lover was not only yielding a ready assent to her relinquishment of fortune, but commending her for it, that that father, incapable of appreciating her, or her lover, was encouraging round her a host of aspirants to her hand, and revolving every possible means of breaking off her marriage with Desbrow.

No sooner had her brother arrived, than the Comte de Bethune endeavoured to enlist him in his plans: he represented that the large fortune which his daughter had so unexpectedly inherited, entirely changed her position and his intentions. While she was portionless, he said, he did not consider himself justified in refusing his consent to an alliance, which the wealth and respectability of Mr. Desbrow rendered unexceptionable, more especially as Lord and Lady Ayrshire had highly approved the intended union, and that Cecile appeared to be attached to him.

"This last is the most essential reason of all for consenting to it," said Auguste, with a vivacity that mortified the Comte: "and does not my sister still feel this attachment?"

"The attachments of persons of her age," replied the father, "are rarely remarkable for their stability."

"You mistake my sister," said Auguste, "if you calculate on the instability of her's, and we have no right to do her this injustice, until we have something more conclusive than a hypothetical opinion, formed on the general inconsistency attributed to her sex. Mr. Desbrow was considered a suitable husband for her, when she was without fortune; and his choice of her under such circumstances proves the disinterestedness of his affection,—a proof, my dear father, that no future suitor can give. Lord and Lady Ayrshire, who were parents to her—parents in the best sense of the term—wished this marriage to take place; and do you think that Lord Ayrshire would have bequeathed Cecile a fortune, if he had thought that it would have been the means of breaking off the union he desired?"

"You do not take into consideration," said the Comte de Bethune, "the mortification it must be to me, to see my daughter fixed for life in England, when her fortune might secure her one of the noblest marriages in France."

"Her *fortune* certainly might," replied Auguste, "but is Cecile a person to be happy in a marriage, which she must owe *wholly* to her fortune,—nay, my father, is she a person to be happy with a Frenchman?"

"What do I hear?" said the father, turning red with

anger; "does a son of mine, think an Englishman more likely to ensure the happiness of my daughter than a Frenchman?"

"You forget," said Auguste, "that Cecile, though born in France, has been educated in England, has imbibed all the feelings and opinions peculiar to that country, and it is as impossible for her steady and solid character to descend to the *légèreté* of one of our young countrymen, as it would be for one of them to ascend to her's. Both would be miserable,—but no, *she* alone would be miserable, for few of *us* can be made unhappy, though we can render others so. I repeat, my dear father, that it appears to me that the honour of my sister, as far as regards generosity, would be impeachable, were she to refuse a man because she is rich, whom she consented to marry when all the advantages of wealth were on his side."

The old Comte looked angry and unconvinced at the reasoning of his son; but he was too well aware of the high feelings of that son, to betray to him how deeply he was influenced by selfish views, in his desire of breaking off the intended marriage, and Auguste was too noble-minded to harbour a suspicion of them.

The time now approached rapidly, when Desbrow might be expected at Paris to claim his bride, and her father saw it arrive with ill-disguised discontent. To attempt to force the affections, or at least the duty, of Cecile, aided as she now was by the presence of her brother, who seemed most unaccountably, as the father considered, disposed to encourage rather than protract the marriage, would be useless; and, therefore, he determined to let things take their course.

"And so, *ma chère petite sœur*," said Auguste, "you only come to France to teach us to love you, and make us feel the pain of losing you. You will marry, then, this Englishman, who will take you to his cold, ceremonious country, away from ——, *la belle* France, the gay Hotel de Bethune, Mesdames de la Rue and Le Moine, *les chers* Coco and Bijou, and all the other *agrémens* of your *entourage*."

"I only grieve, my dear brother," replied Cecile, "that I shall leave you—and my father."

"Well remembered," said Auguste, tapping her cheek; "but I fear, that *notre pauvre père, pauvre, hélas!* in more than one sense of the word, has made you suffer too much from his national prejudices to let you love him much. I see you are going to make a pretty and a dutiful speech, but *n'importe, entre nous deux*, we may, we ought to be candid. I, too, *ma chère petite sœur*, have often had to regret them,

for I am more than half English in my heart. You know that I am three years your senior, a *différence* that entitles me to your respect, so mind you treat me with proper deference;—but, to be serious, those three years of seniority gave me the happiness of knowing our dear sainted mother, my first words were lisped in her native tongue, and I have continued to cultivate it, not only out of affection to her memory, but because I wished to understand something of the country where *ma petite sœur* resided. I know as much, though I blush to say that much is but little, of the literature of England as of that of France, and all I have learned has taught me to love my mother's land. Judge, then, how frequently the prejudices *de notre pauvre père* must have annoyed me; but knowing that it would be useless to combat them, I have listened in silence. I tell you all this, dear Cecile, that you may understand how well I can sympathize in your *feelings;* and if your future husband resembles the notion I have formed of Englishmen, I shall love him as a brother. But why doubt it? *You* love him, and that, to me, is a proof of his excellence, for my Cecile would not lightly give away her heart."

Cecile described Desbrow in terms that she meant to be measured, but the animation of her manner, and the sparkling of her beautiful eyes, belied the coldness of her words; and Auguste, as he kissed her forehead, told her she need not blush, for that he would inform no one that his *petite sœur* was in love, or, at least, he would keep her secret until—she was married.

The last letter received from Desbrow announced that he would be at Paris on the 28th of July, and it now only wanted two days to that period. Cecile's heart beat with joy at the prospect of so soon meeting once more with her affianced husband; but her joy was damped by observing the dissatisfaction marked on the brow of her father, and his total avoidance of all recurrence to the subject of Desbrow's approaching arrival. She had never yet touched on her intention of relinquishing her fortune in favour of her father and brother, to any one save Desbrow. A feeling of delicacy made her shrink from the acknowledgments, or refusals, it might call forth; and she determined that the first announcement of it should be the deed of gift which Desbrow had undertaken to have drawn up for her, and which she wished him to present to her father. Cecile had marked with regret, that her father's dislike to Desbrow had rather increased than diminished, within the last few months; and she thought that such an act

of generosity, as the relinquishment of her large fortune, might induce him to think more favourably of her future husband. She anticipated with delight her parent's surprise and satisfaction, and was indulging in bright day-dreams of the future, when, on the morning of the 28th of July, Auguste came to tell them that he must bid them adieu for a short time, as he had received orders not to leave his regiment, which was to be kept in readiness for being called out at a moment's notice.

A presentiment of evil, against which she tried in vain to struggle, oppressed the spirits of Cecile. Her brother attempted to laugh her out of her dejection, but it was evident that his gaiety was forced; and to the assertions of the Comte de Bethune, that the ordinances published the day before, would be the saving of the throne and the altar, he replied, that he only hoped they might not be made the excuse for subverting both.

"The people must be kept down," said the Comte, angrily, "and to achieve this imperative object, the press, their intellectual steam-engine, must be restrained in due bounds. The king has shown a proper firmness, and if his subjects know not how to bow to the chastisement which their licentiousness has brought upon them, they must be taught,—that's *all*."

"I hope this effort will terminate well," said Auguste, thoughtfully.

"It must," replied his father; "the king has too long acted the indulgent father to his people, and he must now show them that he can assert his own dignity, when they can forget it. France has always been endangered by the too great goodness, or, as others call it, weakness of her sovereigns; and it is reserved for Charles X. to make his subjects respect his firmness."

Auguste cast a glance at Cecile, which showed that he viewed not the present state of things with sentiments the same as those of his father; and then, embracing them both, left the hotel, to join his regiment in the Rue Verte. Cecile could not suppress the tears that rushed into her eyes when she saw her brother gallop from the door; she watched his receding figure until it faded from her sight in the distance, and, unable to control her emotion, was seeking her chamber, when she encountered her father.

"You weep," said he; "this is childish; the daughters of the house of Bethune were not wont to weep, when dangers menaced the sons; they would have girded on their swords, and urged them to oppose the enemies of their king, instead of

giving way to tears. '*Les convenances*' must not be violated, my daughter, so no more tears."

While he strode on with an air of lofty grandeur, Cecile hurried from his presence, wounded by his remarks, and disgusted with the mock heroic dignity of his reproof at such a moment.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

"Qu'est-ce qu'une révolution par le peuple? Les malheurs, du sang, de la honte. Qu'est-ce que la liberté par les révoltes? Un rêve, le désordre, des crimes."

Desbrow arrived at Paris late on the evening of the 27th of July. He had intended to have taken up his abode in one of the hotels in the Rue de Rivoli, but found it impossible to reach it, from the tumult in the streets, and the vast populace which impeded his progress. He ordered his postilions to drive to the Rue de Richelieu, and it was not without considerable difficulty that he reached the Hôtel du Nord in that street. All was confusion. Masses of the populace were continually forming, who resisted the endeavours of the gens-d'armes to disperse them. A charge of cavalry scattered them for some time, but they quickly formed again; and, soon after Desbrow had entered the hotel, regular charges took place, and the gens-d'armes commenced firing on the mob. The shop of Le Page, the armourer, was broken open, and all his arms seized. The cavalry charged again, and a portion of the populace, among whom were some women, rushed into the court of the hotel to seek protection. They were pursued by the soldiers, who, infuriated at the massacre committed amongst them a few minutes before in the Palais Royal, commenced reprisals, not observing, owing to the darkness, that they were attacking unarmed men and women who were mingled with the insurgents.

Desbrow's two servants were unpacking the carriage, and he was standing by it, waiting to receive a case of jewels intended as a bridal present for Cecile, when a party of soldiers rushed into the court, and commenced firing on the people. His servants presented him a pistol, which they had snatched from the

pocket of the carriage; and, almost at the moment he grasped it, a woman fell by his side, mortally wounded by a shot from one of the soldiers, who continued to advance towards the spot where Desbrow stood, brandishing his sword, and cutting right and left. Desbrow warned him not to approach, and raised the pistol to show him that he was armed, when a part of the people who had crowded behind him, with the intention of entering the hotel, having been repulsed by the owners, who had closed the door, were now driven forcibly against him. In the scuffle his pistol went off, and an officer, who had that moment entered the court to call off his men, received its contents and fell from his horse.

Desbrow felt horror-stricken, and the cheering of the mob around him, who cried out, *Vivent les Anglais, bravo, bravo!* almost maddened him. The proprietor of the hotel opened a small side door, and pulled Desbrow into the garden, and thence by a back passage into the house, dreading that the angry soldiers would cut him to pieces. His mind was in a state of the most violent agitation: he thought not of his own safety —he thought only that he had deprived another of life, and that other, evidently a person who came to restore order, and draw off his soldiers. He entreated the proprietor of the hotel to go, or send, to ascertain if there was any hope of saving the wounded officer, though his fears told him that the wound was mortal; and the man, seeing his perturbation and anxiety, dispatched two of his waiters to make inquiries. They soon returned, stating that the officer had been taken into a private house on the Boulevards, where he had expired, and that this information they received from the servant who had assisted to convey him to it. Desbrow groaned aloud, and one of the waiters, with the intention of consoling him, remarked that he had done a good action, for he had killed the only son of one of the greatest enemies of the people, the proudest aristocrat in France, the Comte de Bethune.

All attempts to describe Desbrow's feelings at this intelligence, would be useless. His brain burned, his heart throbbed as if it would have burst its prison, and alternate cold and hot fits shook his frame.

His first impulse was to fly to Cecile—to protect—to console her, under this terrible affliction; but a moment's reflection told him that the murderer of the brother must never again approach the sister. O God! O God! thought Desbrow, was it reserved for my hand to destroy the happiness of her, I would sacrifice my life to preserve from a pang?—And now rushed to his me-

mory all the fond things Cecile had filled her last two letters with, relative to this lately found and dearly beloved brother. And *he*—*he*—had murdered him! There was agony, there was madness in the thought!

A violent brain fever seized Desbrow in the course of the night, and for ten days his life was despaired of; his faithful servant never left his bed-side, during which period, the sick man raved incessantly of Cecile and her brother, and implored to be taken to them.

A naturally strong constitution enabled him to conquer this malady, though it left him reduced to almost infantine weakness; but with returning health came memory, which brought before him all the misery of his position. A letter was given to him, with a black edge and seal; and it almost fell from his trembling hand, when he saw the signature of the Comte de Bethune. Its contents were nearly as follows:

"Sir,

"After the dreadful calamity you have brought on my house, you cannot be surprised at my prohibiting you from ever again addressing my daughter. Your own feelings would, I trust, render this prohibition unnecessary, but I owe it to her peace of mind to make it. I will not reproach you; your own heart must avenge the wounds you have inflicted on ours.

"Gustave, Comte de Bethune."

"How strange," thought Desbrow, "that he should think it possible that I could again seek Cecile! He must believe me totally bereft of feeling, nay, of common delicacy. Strange, too, that he should write to me; but he is unlike other men."

To think of Cecile was torture, but not to think of her was impossible. Every recollection of her was fraught with wretchedness, because it was associated with her murdered brother, and the sorrow *he* had heaped on her head. He pictured her to himself, pale and worn with grief, the shadow of her former self, weeping with bitter burning tears the loss of a brother so beloved, and shrinking beneath the accumulated misery, that she owed that cruel blow to *him*, whom she had so loved and trusted. Sometimes he thought of writing to her, of telling her how deeply, how truly he sympathized in her grief; but could she again look at the characters traced by a hand stained with the blood of her brother! No! he must not—dare not—intrude on the sacred privacy of her feelings! he never now could be aught to her, save a person whose name she must shudder at hearing; and the blissful dreams of happiness he had indulged for so many months—indulged until they had become a part of his existence, must now be abandoned for ever. Every hour

that he remained in Paris seemed to increase, instead of diminishing, the chagrin that weighed on his spirits and preyed on his heart; and the medical men who attended him, observing the slow progress he made towards returning health, strenuously advised his going to Italy, as soon as he could bear the journey. To return to England, and face the friends he had prepared to welcome his bride, he had not nerves to support. How could he enter the home he had taken such pleasure to decorate for her, now that he must seek it *alone?*

Such reflections led him to adopt the advice of his physicians: it was better to go to Italy—any where, in short, where he was unknown—than to remain at Paris, or to return to England at present. Yet it was not without a bitter pang that he left Paris, for it contained Cecile; and all who have loved can enter into his feelings, as it receded from his view. He would have given worlds to have ascertained the state of her health, and feelings, before he departed; but an invincible dread of discovering to his servants anything more of the causes of his misery than they already knew, precluded him from sending to inquire at the Hotel de Bethune; and his debility permitted him not to move, except with the aid of his valet's arm, and then only for a few steps.

Three weeks before, Desbrow had entered Paris, high in hope and health;—he now left it, the first, crushed for ever, and the latter, broken down. His thoughts reverted to Heatherfield—*he* could feel for him—and for a moment he wished he was with him—But no! why should he draw on the sympathy of a friend, who could only share his sufferings, without the power of relieving them.

Such were the reflections of Desbrow, as he slowly journeyed towards Italy; and we shall leave him to pursue his melancholy route, while we return to her who occupied all his thoughts, and who was scarcely less unhappy than her lover.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

"Un pays en révolution souffre tout. Son lot est de boire à tous les calices d'humiliation. Rien ne corrompt et n'avilit le caractère moral d'un royaume comme une série de renversemens politiques. Le peuple, au milieu des tempêtes intestines, perd honneur, vertus, traditions et piété; il croit à tous les monstres, et n'a plus foi en Dieu. Il adopte toutes les routes hors celle qui conduit au bien. Ayant un vaste ramas de lois, car chaque parti vainqueur a fait la sienne en passant, il ne distingue plus les vraies des fausses; il se prosterne déchu devant des millions de volontés et de maximes, sans distinguer quelles sont les bonnes, et sans savoir où il en est. Son plus grand fléau, c'est lui-même. La fortune publique, en proie aux dilapidateurs, est en quelque façon jouée aux dés par les ministres de la majesté parvenue; et toute pliée sous les opprobres, la nation s'affaise et périt."

Never had a day appeared so long to Cecile, as the 28th of July, that day so long looked forward to, as the one fixed for the arrival of Desbrow. At an early hour, the people assembled in masses in the street, and their tumultuous cries disturbed the monotonous tranquillity of the Faubourg St. Germain, and reached even the secluded Hotel de Bethune.

Cecile shuddered involuntarily as each fresh shout was borne on the wind, and re-echoed from the lofty apartments around her. Her father began to be less loud in his approval of the ordinances, now that they seemed to have excited the storm, which alarmed him; but he consoled himself with the idea, that the military force in Paris and its environs was amply sufficient to reduce the canaille to obedience; and he "muttered curses, not loud though deep," on their heads, wishing, like Nero, that they had but one neck, that with one blow he might extirpate them.

Notwithstanding the boasted march of intellect, nay, probably from that cause, an antipathy seems to exist between the upper and lower classes in France, which, though it may slumber in peaceful times, bursts forth with fury when any popular tumult awakens it into action. The feudal tyranny and heartless profligacy of the greater part of the noblesse of *l'ancien régime*, and the atrocious cruelty with which it was punished, have engendered a sense of mutual injury in the hearts of both parties, of which perhaps neither are sensible, until some occasion of contest calls it forth. The *parvenue*

noblesse, created by Napoleon, are, strange to say, not more favourably viewed by the people, from whose ranks they were elevated, than are those of *l'ancien régime;* because they excite more jealousy, each member of their original class thinking himself as well worthy the distinction bestowed on his more fortunate equal. Hence, dislike is added to a want of that respect which nobility of ancient birth involuntarily excites in their minds, and which, the associations connected with certain names keep alive in their hearts. The three glorious, or inglorious, days of the revolution of 1830 (as many people are divided as to which term they are best entitled), fully proved the truth of this antipathy between the upper and lower classes. The first groaned in bitterness at being humbled by the power of those they considered born but to obey them; and the second evinced all the insulting joy, natural to ignoble minds, at hurling grandeur and dignity from the lofty places they had occupied. They paused not to inquire whether they had worthily or unworthily filled these high stations; they only hated them for having been elevated, and gloried in crushing them. This feeling was strikingly manifested in the tradespeople and servants,—two classes owing their welfare, if not existence, to the noblesse they were so anxious to humiliate, if not destroy. The march of civilization, which precluded the atrocities practised in the former revolution, prevented not, however, the insulting display of triumph with which the engines of the latter proclaimed their victory over fallen power. The tradespeople, who had fattened on the extortions practised on the noblesse, and the domestics, who had eaten of their bread, and worn the badges of their service, could not conceal their joy at their overthrow. Those who witnessed the conduct of these classes at Paris, during the three days of the revolution in 1830, must involuntarily have been reminded of the Saturnalia of ancient Rome, when the slaves were allowed, not only liberty, but license. One difference however existed,—the Roman bondmen only doffed their chains for a given period, and then resumed them; but the French domestics believed—for what will not ignorance and credulity believe?—that they had permanently changed places with their masters, and, glorying in their victory, manifested their sense of it with all the licentiousness of uncultivated, unbridled, and truculent minds.

The Comte de Bethune was suffered to ring half-a-dozen times for his *valet-de-chambre*, who afterwards listened with an air of nonchalance, if not of insolence, to his remonstrance

on the subject. The two *valets-de-pied* had disappeared without leave; the *aide de cuisine* had followed their example, and the coachman had volunteered his services to go in search of them, a search apparently fruitless, as he himself returned no more to the hotel during that day. The cook declared himself *au désespoir;* it was impossible for him to serve a dinner for Monsieur le Comte, without the assistance of his *aide de cuisine*—he had never in his life attempted such a feat; so he consoled himself with taking a double supply of snuff, and loudly lamenting the *bêtise*, the *sottise*, and the impertinence of Jules (his assistant), for leaving the *cuisine* without his permission.

The Comte found his appetite rather increased than diminished by the agitation and vexation of the day; and the prospect of having no dinner seemed to awaken him to a full sense of the events passing around him. He entered the salon of Cecile with a more troubled aspect than she had ever seen him wear, which increased the fear of the already alarmed girl to such a degree, that she turned deadly pale, and could hardly articulate the demand, if anything had happened to her brother.

"No, nothing has happened—nothing can happen to him," said the Comte, "for our brave troops will soon have taught obedience to the disaffected wretches that have caused this confusion."

"Oh, God be praised that my dear brother is safe!" said Cecile, sinking into the chair from which she had risen in such alarm on her father's entrance; when, a yell from the infuriated multitude, passing the hotel, renewed her fears. The Comte's countenance wore a more yellow hue, and neither spoke until the shouts died in the distance; then Cecile, whose thoughts dwelt with her brother, again ejaculated his name.

"It is dreadful! shocking!" said the Comte, "to think that we shall have no—" (tidings of him, Cecile thought he was going to add), but the word "dinner" escaped his lips, and grated on her feelings most painfully. A sentiment of disgust made her turn involuntarily from him; but he persevered in his lamentations, and, deducing causes from their effects, attributed the flight of the *aide de cuisine*, the shutting up of the shops, and his consequent likelihood of going without a dinner, to the revolutionary principles of the *canaille*. Nor did he forget to state his belief, that to England France owed this misfortune.

The comte was in the habit of tracing every thing which he

fancied an evil, in the minor concerns of life, to the influence of English example; and all the serious calamities he attributed to the same cause. He frequently expressed his conviction that the unfortunate Louis the Sixteenth would never have been beheaded, but for the precedent afforded by the English in the decapitation of Charles the First; and, though Cecile ventured to tell him that the atrocious cruelties practised during the French Revolution had no parallel in that of the English, he ceased not to mutter, "Yes, yes; we are too near England: in exchange for our *modes* and cooks, they send us their newspapers, through which our populace imbibe such pernicious principles. They teach the vile doctrine that kings do not reign by a right divine, and that they depend on the people, instead of the people depending on them. Yes, yes; Comines the historian was right, when he said that 'Dieu n'a créé aucune chose en ce monde, ni hommes ni bêtes, à qui il n'ait fait quelque chose son contraire, pour la tenir en crainte et en humilité. C'est pourquoi il a fait France et Angleterre voisines.'"

The proverb says, "beware of him who has read but one book." If the Comte de Bethune's erudition was not confined to this limit, it was wholly directed to one focus. He read with avidity every French publication reflecting on England and the English, implicitly believing all that could be advanced derogatory to the nation *en masse*, or its inhabitants individually; and if by any chance he met with a doubtful passage in some unprejudiced author, he was sure to turn it to the disadvantage of England. And yet this man had married a most amiable Englishwoman, and owed innumerable obligations to her relations, whose conduct towards him and his daughter ought to have conquered all his antipathies to their country.

The porter had secured the *porte cochère*, and opened not the wicket, without being previously assured that the person requiring admission belonged to the house. But though attached to the family, he could not resist sympathizing with the cries of joy which burst from the crowds that rushed through the street; and even Madame le Moine, who had grown, and was now sinking in years, beneath the aristocratic roof which sheltered her, could not repress some symptoms of complacency, as she observed the rapid progress of the power of the people, though she took abundant care not to exhibit them in the presence of the Comte.

Poor Madame de la Rue, belonging neither to the aristocracy nor the people, was the only person in the hotel who

truly sympathized in the feelings of the Comte; but having always depended on the first, she affected to consider herself as a link in their chain; an affectation which had drawn on her the dislike of the domestics in the establishment of the Duchesse de Montcalm, and excited similar feelings in those of the Hôtel de Bethune.

The servants of the Comte, like those of the generality of the noblesse at Paris, would have used all possible means to save their masters from personal danger; but were not sorry the masters should see the power of the people, and be forced to admit that they owed their safety to them.

Cecile had sought the solitude of her chamber, and on her knees implored the protection of Heaven for her brother: of herself she thought not, every fear was for him, and a thousand presentiments of his danger suggested themselves to her terrified mind. Desbrow, too, often occupied her thoughts during this day of agitation, but for him she had less fear; he was an Englishman, and could not be brought into hostile contact with the people, while Auguste would be sent to act against them, and her heart sunk within her, as imagination pictured his danger. With her hands pressed to her side, as if to still the beating of her trembling heart, and a face pale as marble, Cecile was found by her father when he came to summon her to dinner.

"I have been forced to go into the *cuisine* myself," said he, "to see what could be done, for that imbecile Latour could do nothing without his *aide de cuisine;* and with the assistance of Madame le Moine, we have managed to get a tolerable *soupe*, an *émincé de veau*, cutlets *à la minute*, and an *omelette soufflée—c'est mieux que rien*, for the annoyance of this distressing business has quite deranged my stomach, and made me feel the necessity of eating."

Cecile accompanied him to the *salle à manger*, and saw him do ample justice to the repast, during which he complimented his own sagacity that had led him to the *cuisine*, and to which he owed his dinner. She tried to swallow a few morsels, but could not; and, in answer to her father's angry remonstrances, urging that the more one had to bear, the more one ought to eat, in order to gain strength to support our misfortunes, she could only murmur the name of her brother, and repeat the impossibility of her possessing any appetite while he was exposed to danger.

"It is very inconsiderate, to use no harsher term, Mademoi-

selle de Bethune, to mention his peril at such a moment. After the full repast, to which my mental agitation has forced me, you expose *me* to the certain danger of an indigestion, while *he* is only exposed to the uncertain risk of violence from the *canaille*, who will soon fly before the regular troops. You have awakened apprehensions which, though my reason tells me they are unfounded, cannot fail to interfere with the digestive organ, and I shall have an attack of bile to-morrow. Go," turning to the *maître-d'hôtel*, "and get me a cup of strong *café*, and bring the *chasse café* immediately after. I hope I may escape, though I feel a very uncomfortable sensation here;" (laying his hand on the epigastric region;) "and another time, Mademoiselle de Bethune, I request you will be more cautious. You will do well to imitate my philosophy; you see it always leaves me master of myself in the most trying exigencies. What, but this, gave me sufficient presence of mind to go into the *cuisine* to-day, when that imbecile Latour had completely lost his reasoning powers, and you see the result has been a very tolerable dinner. Even at the moment I am speaking to you, my philosophy enables me calmly to point out to you the dangers to which your inconsiderateness had exposed me, that you may learn to control similar ebullitions of it in future."

The Comte having dispatched his *café* and *liqueur*, replaced his coat by a *robe-de-chambre*, and seated himself in an easy chair, that by a siesta he might assist the process of digestion; and Cecile was left alone to her own reflections.

Madame le Moine, having discovered from the *maître-d'hôtel*, that their young lady had not eaten anything at dinner, brought in a *lait de poule*, of which she so pressed her to partake, that Cecile yielded, and then declared her anxiety to obtain some intelligence of her brother.

"Would it not be possible to send one of the servants to try to learn something of him?" asked she.

"There is only the porter, the *maître-d'hôtel*, and the cook in the house, mademoiselle," replied Madame le Moine; "the first cannot leave his post—the second would mortally offend Monsieur le Comte, if he were absent from the antechamber when Monsieur le Comte awakes from his siesta."

"But *le cuisinier*," interrupted Cecile, "he surely might go—he could not be missed by my father now that dinner in over."

"Ah! mademoiselle does not know Latour, said Madame

le Moine, "he is the greatest poltroon in the world, and would not venture outside the *porte cochère*, for all the gold in Paris."

"What is to be done? Oh! my brother, my dear brother!" exclaimed Cecile; "how long must I remain in this terrible state of suspense about your safety."

At this moment, a discharge of musketry from a distance, followed by shouts and yells, interrupted her words, and increased her terrors, and the barking of Madame de la Rue's dog, and loud imitation of it by her parrot, broke on the silence of the hotel. The ire of Madame le Moine became excited, and she ran to the chamber of the poor *dame de compagnie*, loudly expressing her surprise and indignation that the infernal dog, and accursed parrot, as she called them, should be allowed to torment her young lady, when her nerves were in such a state of excitement. The loud and angry tones of le Moine only served to increase afresh the barking of the dog, and the still more discordant cries of the parrot; and their discomfited mistress, alarmed by the violence of the *femme-de-chambre*, which now that Paris was in a state of revolt appeared more to be dreaded, tried in vain to silence them.

"You see," said she, almost meekly, to Madame le Moine, "it is not my fault; I cannot keep them quiet: it is the firing that excites them."

At this luckless moment, the parrot uttered one of the offensive names it had been taught to address to Madame le Moine, who, losing all patience, pounced on poor Coco, and, ere its mistress could protect it from her fury, silenced it for ever, by wringing its neck; during which operation, Bijou assailed the petticoats of le Moine with his teeth, as if to rescue his companion from her gripe.

"Barbarous woman, you have killed my poor bird!" cried the weeping Madame de la Rue, while torrents of tears streamed over her rouged cheeks, leaving deep furrows to mark their course. Madame le Moine, feeling she had gone too far, yet too proud to attempt any excuse, threw down the dead bird, which was hastily seized by its sobbing mistress, and kissed and bedewed with her tears, while the assassin returned to her young lady, ashamed of the excess into which her anger had hurried her.

"Well, mademoiselle," said she, trying to smooth her ruffled brow, "I see no mode of learning intelligence of Monsieur

Auguste, except by my going towards the Rue Verte, to the barracks in which his regiment is lodged."

"Oh, my good Madame le Moine, how shall I thank you?" replied Cecile; "yet ought I to expose you to such danger?"

"Think not of it, mademoiselle; no one will mind an old woman like me, and I shall be cheered by the hope of bringing you intelligence of the safety of Monsieur Auguste."

So saying, she left her young mistress, and hastened to attire herself for her hazardous expedition, not forgetting, before she went, to arrange a mess for Bijou, and to send a *cafetière* of excellent *café au lait* to Madame de la Rue, as a peace-offering.

It was not without great difficulty and still greater danger that the intrepid old woman arrived at the Rue Verte. She had to climb over various barricades, to cling to the closed *portes cochères* of many hotels, in order to escape the rushing parties of the populace, charged by, and charging, in their turn, the military, who were trying to disperse them. But even her terror prevented her not from examining every party of soldiers she saw, in the hope of discovering Monsieur Auguste; no trace, however, of him could she find. At length, having reached the Rue Verte, she discovered that the people had attacked the barracks in that street, and even at that moment, an active fire against them was kept up by the assailants.

In trying to clamber over the barricades once more, the poor old woman, sinking with heat and excessive fatigue, made a false step, and fell over the heterogeneous mass that composed the pile raised to arrest the progress of the cavalry; and her temples, coming in violent contact with a sharp-pointed stone, she became stunned by the fall. When she recovered her senses, she found herself in a wine shop, close to the barricade, into which the humanity of some of the people had induced them to place her, not without sundry curses on the folly that had induced her to venture out at such a time. The woman of the shop washed the blood from her face, applied a bandage to her wounded forehead, and, having insisted on her taking a glass of wine, advised her to remain where she was, for the present. But the pale face and trembling anxiety of her young lady rose up to the imagination of Madame le Moine; and, though weak and exhausted, she again pursued her way through the street, one moment silent and deserted, the very dogs seeming frightened from their usual haunts, and

the next, filled by masses of the populace, who rushed past her, sweeping away all that obstructed their course. At the Rue Royale, she saw a party of dragoons, and recognised the uniform to be that of the regiment to which the young Comte de Bethune belonged. She advanced to them, fearless of the danger with which their horses' feet threatened her.

"Stop, stop, I pray you!" exclaimed she, in almost breathless agitation; "tell me—tell me where is Monsieur Auguste, your officer?"

The soldiers passed on, scarcely turning their heads to regard her, while a few straggling people around passed some rude jokes on her bandaged forehead, through which the blood obtruded. At this moment, when her trembling limbs refused any longer to support her, and that she looked in vain for some shop, or *porte cochère*, where she might enter, a man seized her arm, and, inspecting closely her face, exclaimed, "It is—it must be my aunt! In God's name, what do you here at such a moment?—why have you come abroad? You must be mad to venture out, and you have paid dearly for it too; for I see you are wounded. Well, well, the women now-a-days are more venturous than the men;—but how were you wounded?"

The poor old woman recounted her adventures in much fewer words than she was wont to use, a circumstance which drew too reflections from her *brusque* nephew,—the first was, that she was an old *imbécile* to have ventured on such an expedition, and the second, that the hurt must be a serious one, which could produce such a miraculous abridgment of her words.

"This is a droll world," continued Jacques; "here have you, my old aunt, been exposing your life for the aristocrats, and more fool you, while I have been exposing mine against them. But the victory will be on my side, and a few hours will now decide the question."

"And so I must return without any intelligence of my dear young master," exclaimed the weeping Madame le Moine.

"Master!" exclaimed the nephew, angrily; "you forget that *we*, the people, of whom you are one, have no longer any masters; it is now our turn to rule, for we are the conquerors."

Jacques supported his nearly exhausted aunt to the Hôtel de Bethune, meeting on their way several straggling parties of the people, shouting and singing parts of revolutionary songs, in

which he joined; and having seen her within the *porte cochère*, he cautioned her not again to venture out until all was quietly settled, and promised to bring her intelligence of Monsieur Auguste the next day.

" As for your old aristocrat of a master, as you are pleased to call him," added Jacques, " Monsieur Tout Fier, I advise him not to show himself amongst us, for we want to see all the old *émigrés* out of the country, and the sooner they are gone the better."

Having expressed this flattering opinion, he left his aunt to the care of the porter, who seated her in his lodge, that she might recover herself a little, before she presented herself to her young lady.

The Comte de Bethune was awakened from his siesta by the discharge of musketry, that seemed to approach closer to the quarter in which the hotel was situated, than any that he had hitherto heard. He rang for his *valet-de-chambre*, and inquired how the riot, as he affected to call it, was going on.

" *Ma foi*, Monsieur le Comte, the *riot* is turning out to be a *révolution*," said Le Tellier; " the people are carrying every thing before them, and it is all over with the present dynasty."

" I will not, I cannot believe it," said the Comte, angrily; " with thirty thousand soldiers in the environs, it is impossible that the canaille can have gained any serious advantage." Had the Comte examined the countenance of his valet, he would have seen the half-suppressed smile that played over it—a smile that at this moment betrayed how entirely his sympathies were with those whom the Comte designated by the term canaille, and of whose triumph Le Tellier allowed himself not to doubt.

In the following instant, a cry in the court-yard attracted the attention of the Comte, and he hurried to the open window of the ante-room, whence he beheld the *aide de cuisine*, evidently intoxicated, advancing towards the house, and brandishing a sword, while he screamed out, " *La liberté ! la liberté !*"

" Send that beast away instantly," said the Comte, an order more easily given than carried into effect, for Guillaume had become pot-valiant, and having never used a sword until that day, would neither consent to relinquish it, nor to leave the hotel, though assailed by the united entreaties of the porter, *valet-de-chambre*, and *cuisinier*. More than entreaties they dared not try, for he brandished the sword in a way to alarm the three pacifically disposed old men, and boasted that he was " *un enfant de la révolution*," " *un brave*," who had that day

fought for *la liberté*,—nay, he displayed some trophies, in the shape of a pistol and dagger, won in the battle, which rendered the old men fearful of offending him.

"As for you, old fool," said Guillaume, turning to the *cuisinier*, "you are no longer *mon chef*. No, no, we are now all equals,—yet no, not even so, the strongest must be the masters; and, as I am stronger than you, I order you to prepare me a supper, *bien soigné:* mind you are not long about it, or I shall quicken your movements with a touch of this," pointing the sword at the frightened cook, who disappeared, terrified at the threats of the swaggerer, who had hitherto been one of his most submissive drudges, and who now uttered cries of "Liberty! liberty!" that echoed through the court-yard.

Few words have ever been so profaned as the word liberty, —a word so often misunderstood, that those who most worship the pure sentiment, shrink with abhorrence from the grim and distorted representations of it that ignorance and prejudice love to give. The French invariably mistake license and equality for liberty; and the feeling of the *bête* Guillaume on the subject may stand for a faithful type of that of the whole of the lower classes of his countrymen.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

"On reconnait l'amour véritable aux changemens qu'il produit dans notre caractère, et aux sacrifices qu'il nous rend légers."

We left Lord Heatherfield journeying towards his home, but with what different feelings did he now enter his paternal mansion! He no longer shrank from the glances of the old and respectable domestics, who had been in his family since his birth; and they knowing where, and how, the last few months had been passed, received him with joyful demonstrations of welcome. He could now look on the portraits of his excellent father and mother without experiencing any of the pangs of self-reproach; and he fancied they regarded him with the benignant smiles of approval which the dear originals had been wont to accord him in past days. Cold must be the heart of the person who can look on the portraits of those he has loved

—of those who loved him, and who are in the grave—and not refer to what *they* would have thought of the line of conduct he is pursuing!—nay, who do not refer to the thought with more tenderness than when they were in life! The portraits are all that remain to us,—"shadows of shades" that have vanished,—but they possess a power to bring back the past and to warn us of the future. In the rooms where they hang, we have heard the voices of the dear originals addressing us with words of love; we have seen their eyes sparkle at our approach, and their lips welcome us with smiles. They are not all gone, while their resemblances remain to conjure up dreams of past happiness, and to renew in our breasts the feelings which in life they were wont to excite in us. When I see a son, furnishing and decorating the mansion which he has newly inherited, and destroying every vestige of its late occupiers, I cannot give him credit for much affection towards those he has lost. I would fain have one room, at least, preserved sacred, where their images might seem to look down on the furniture they had used, and the apartment retain the same appearance as when they had lived in it. What salutary reflections might it not awaken in the children who are now filling their places, to pass away like them, and like them to be replaced! But the luxurious inheritors of the present day, and the fashionable decorators and upholsterers, or rather devastators, who suggest to them the thousand improvements of which the basis is destruction, will rarely admit of even one room being left sacred to the Penates; and the household gods, together with the household goods and family portraits,—unless the latter are saved by being the work of some artist of celebrity,—are banished to the lumber, or the auction-room, to make way for modern advancement and modern disfigurements.

Lord Heatherfield arrived at Heatherfield Park on Saturday evening, and the next day attended service in the parish church. The fame of his good deeds in Wales had arrived before him, and there was not a single individual among the whole congregation who felt not a pleasurable sensation on his entrance, and who was not disposed to disbelieve all that they had ever heard to his disadvantage. Never did he offer up his prayers with so much fervour as now, when once more in that church, where so often they had mingled with those of the beloved parents, who were sleeping the sleep of the just in the tomb on which his eye rested. Who can gaze on the grave that contains the mortal remains of all that was dear to him, without

lifting up the soul to that heaven where he hopes one day to be united to them? Without this hope, who could contemplate the grave without terror? A few months ago, and Heatherfield looked forward to eternal exile from the spot on which he now found himself,—for never would he have brought a guilty mistress, or a dishonoured wife, to his home, or the house of God, where his excellent parents had offered so pure an example. But now—and deeply, truly, did he thank the "Giver of all good"—he was saved from sin and exile, and could look in the faces of those who had loved and respected his parents, without fearing to meet reproval in their glances.

The good Dean Vandeleur, and his worthy wife, were the first to welcome Lord Heatherfield to his home: they had been judicious dispensers of his bounty during his absence, and the poor had been taught by them to bless the liberality of their benefactor. The friends and neighbours, who had so long been attached to his father, now flocked to Heatherfield Castle; and its owner found himself treated with the consideration and cordiality he feared he had forfeited by his unhappy entanglement with Lady Walmer, and the evils it had entailed.

He applied himself to nearly the same routine of life that he had followed in Wales, interrupted only by the visit to, and from, his neighbours; many of whom, blessed with daughters, showed no want of encouragement towards him whom a few months before they branded as an immoral libertine, unfit to be received in their families. They had sentenced him without proof of his guilt, and now, absolved him without proof of his innocence. But he was still unmarried, had a large fortune, and an ancient title; and the world in general, and the fathers and mothers of marriageable daughters in particular, are peculiarly charitable towards such sinners, reserving all their severity for the female partners of their real or imputed crimes. Many an amiable young lady undertook the task of dispelling the gravity, if not melancholy, that pervaded the manners of Lord Heatherfield: and many more betrayed a sentimental sympathy with his feelings, that would no doubt have been highly flattering to him, had he observed what was passing around him; but his thoughts were so wholly occupied with the image of Lady Emily Vavasour, that he was unconscious of the condescending kindness of his fair neighbours, and pursued the even tenor of his way, undisturbed by their attractions and attentions.

The papers announced the departure of Lord Vavasour, and his family, for the Continent; and, though Heatherfield felt a

pang of regret as he read it, at thinking that Emily was no longer in the same country with him, he found consolation—nay, more than consolation—hope, in the reflection that Cecile, when she should have become the wife of his friend, would not fail to impart to Lady Emily, all that Desbrow would wish her to know relative to him. He now became impatient to hear of the marriage, and anxiously expected the letter from his friend that was to announce it, when he was shocked and alarmed by the accounts that reached England of the revolution at Paris. What a scene for Emily, and in her state of delicate health! He determined to set off to Paris directly, for he could not support the anxiety he felt; and he was on the road to Dover in less than two hours after he had heard the announcement that had so painfully agitated him.

He travelled day and night without stopping, except to change horses, until he arrived at Paris. He met crowds of his compatriots on the road, returning from it, all of whom looked at him with surprise for hurrying to a place, whence they felt so delighted to get away. He examined every carriage he saw, but that of Lord Vavasour no where met his view; and a thousand fears were in his mind relative to Emily. He expected to have some trouble in passing the barriers on his entrance to Paris, but he found none; nay, being recognised as an Englishman, he was hailed with acclamations, and *Vivent les braves Anglais* was shouted aloud by many of the intoxicated groups who were passing to and fro, in the streets.

He stopped at the Hôtel de Londres, in the Place Vendôme; and immediately proceeded to the British embassy, where he learned that Lord Vavasour and his family were safe and well, at the Hôtel de Breteuil, Rue de Rivoli, and had suffered no annoyance, save alarm, during the three days of the revolution. His next inquiries were for Desbrow; but of him, to his great surprise, he could learn nothing. He had not presented himself at the embassy, and they therefore concluded that he could not have arrived in Paris. He obtained the address of the Comte de Bethune, intending to call on him the next day to inquire for Desbrow; and then, sought his hotel to take that refreshment, and rest, of which he felt he stood so much in need. His spirits were elated at finding himself once more so near his dear Emily, and being assured of her safety; yet still a vague dread of some accident having occurred to Desbrow, interposed to throw a damp over his nearly recovered cheerfulness. It was strange, it was unaccountable. What could have prevented his arriving at Paris so long after the time fixed for his being

there? for well knew Lord Heatherfield that the revolution, and the dangers attendant on it, would have rather hastened, than retarded, the coming of Desbrow, who would be doubly anxious to be near Cecile at such a crisis. Was it possible, that on the route to Paris Desbrow could have fallen a victim to any of the numerous bands of infuriated revolutionists marching towards the capital? This idea more than once occurred to Lord Heatherfield, and filled him with alarm. But to-morrow, thought he, I shall certainly learn tidings of him at the Hôtel de Bethune; and with this hope he sought his pillow to dream of his Emily, and days of happiness to come.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

"Le fleuve révolutionnaire, où l'on disait vouloir retremper la nation, est une mer sanglante que l'usurpation se flatte en vain de traverser à pied sec: tout s'y engloutira à la fois, gouvernement, lois et royaume."

The breaking out of the revolution in 1830, was so sudden that the greater number of English families of distinction who found themselves there, at that eventful moment, had not time to quit Paris before things had arrived at such a state that any attempt to do so would, in all probability, have exposed them to more personal danger than remaining on the spot. Lord Vavasour, therefore, decided on staying where he was, and during the three alarming days of violence, did not leave his wife and daughter for a moment. It was not until the fifth day that, having sent a servant to inquire after the health of Mademoiselle de Bethune, they learned that she was ill, and confined to her bed, and that her brother had been dangerously wounded on the night of the 28th. This was all they could learn, for "Mademoiselle was too ill to write, or even read a billet," as the old *femme de charge* stated to Lord Vavasour's servant. Emily would have immediately flown to her friend, but the barricades prevented the possibility of a carriage of any kind being used, and to venture through the streets on foot, was more than she had courage to encounter, had the delicacy of her health even allowed of her walking so far. While they were expressing their regret and anxiety, Lord Scamper was announced; and,

having heard the cause of their uneasiness, kindly voluntered to go in person to the Hôtel de Bethune.

"Mr. Desbrow must be there, long before this," said Lady Vavasour, "for I know he was expected to arrive on the 28th, and it is a great source of consolation to me that he should be on the spot at such a moment. The marriage of Mademoiselle de Bethune was to have taken place almost immediately after his arrival, and my daughter has promised to attend her friend to the altar."

"Well, if Desbrow is there," said Lord Scamper, "I shall see him; he is a very good fellow, though somewhat too liberal in his politics for me—I am, as you all know, a staunch Tory; and, hang me if I do not feel ten times a more ultra one, since I have seen what your liberals have effected here, in so short a time. I have been in the midst of all their fighting, as a cool spectator: they wanted me to take a part—nay, tried to force me into their ranks, but I declined, and saw no glory to be gained in joining a band of ragamuffins, set on to fight by a few interested political speculators, who keep back until they see which party is the stronger, and if their mob succeed in overturning law and order, they will come forward to take all the merit to themselves, and laugh in their sleeves at those who have been solely fighting to make great men of *them*. I must say these Frenchmen are as brave as lions; by Jove, I saw them do wonders; but what good will it do them?—in three years they will have much less liberty, under some liberal king *imposed* on them, while they are taught to believe they have chosen him, than they had under their old legitimate sovereign, whose only fault was letting them go on too far, and then pulling them up too short without knowing whether the reins were strong enough to hold them in. Ay, ay, you may smile," seeing Lord Vavasour look less grave than usual, "but I've been amongst them, and seen what sort of a set they are: they no more understand the *real* meaning of the word liberty, than a Hottentot does Greek; for they mistake licence and equality for it; and it is to obtain both these, that they are so ready to fight. I have been telling all this to my wife, who has got a pack of new-fangled notions in her head, and says it was a grand sight to see a nation rise *en masse*, to defend their liberties; just as if she could know any thing about the matter. But all this perversion and conceit comes from her having once met one of these Doctrinaire writers at the Princess Valskinca's, whose *soirées* are a sort of zoological garden, where all sorts of animals are to be found; and the *Doctrinaire*, intending to mount by the brute force of the po-

palace, made fine speeches of the *grandeur* of a people fighting for liberty, while I was longing to tell him, if I could have made it out in French, that I saw no *grandeur* in a mob fighting to put aside legitimate authorities, and set up such as himself in their place. People may say what they will; but things that read very fine in print, when they are set off in well-chosen words, make but a poor figure when one is on the spot to see them—behind the curtain, as one may say; and how I shall laugh, when our English newspapers come over here, filled with sublime descriptions of scenes, which certainly presented nothing sublime to my simple eyes, though they offered a good deal of the ridiculous. Oh! *à-propos* to the ridiculous, I forgot to tell you that Lord and Lady Arden arrived at our hotel the night before the revolution broke out. *He* behaved like a philosopher all through; and what is more, like a Christian, for he has a kind heart and tender nature, and was grieved that a single life should be lost. But for her, it was better than a comedy to see her. She thought that every gun fired was aimed at her person, was angry with her husband because he was not more alarmed, and between the firing demanded of all around her if they believed in the existence of a future state, and grew pale when they answered her in the affirmative. Luckily for her ladyship's peace, her Italian courier, who believes in nothing, except the gullibility and inexhaustible purses of the English, assured her that there was no hereafter; and this information infinitely soothed her feelings. So much for a lady who sets up for *un esprit fort*—a philosopher in petticoats. Well, well, I must say, I never saw an *esprit fort* who was not more superstitious and weak than other people. By the by, she says, that she saw Lady Walmer at Milan, at the opera; and that her ladyship left it the next day, to be married at Florence."

Lord and Lady Vavasour cast glances of alarm at their daughter, whose pale cheeks became tinged with a deep rose, at the intelligence so incautiously repeated. Emily would have given worlds to have questioned Lord Scamper further on the subject, but she dared not trust herself; and her father and mother, though nearly equally anxious, would not, in her presence, prolong the conversation. Lord Scamper took his leave, promising to return in the evening, with intelligence of Mademoiselle de Bethune, and had only advanced a few yards from the hotel, when, to his great surprise, he encountered Lord Heatherfield.

"Why, bless my soul," exclaimed Lord Scamper, "you here

the very last man in the world I expected to meet;—when did you come? where do you lodge? and is your wife with you?"

"In reply to your two first questions, I came last night, lodge at the hôtel de Londres, Place Vendôme; but, as I have no wife, I came alone."

"What! no wife! this is strange; for Lady Arden told us that Lady Walmer had gone to Florence to be married; and I naturally enough concluded it must have been to you. To be sure I left the room before her sententious ladyship had more than half finished her story; and *entre nous*, as they say here, a pretty deal of sly scandalous hits were mixed up in it. And so, after all, here you are, still free from the shackles of matrimony. Happy dog! if you but knew your happiness! Would that I was equally free! but, like a fool, I was flattered into putting on my chains, and they have galled me ever since; and not a word of flattery do I get to render them lighter. I can hardly believe that Lady Scamper and Lady Janet Urquhart were one and the same person. She who used to be all smiles, and assented to every opinion, right or wrong, that I expressed, has never once agreed with me since we married, except it be, as I shrewdly suspect, in wishing the chains snapt that unite us. But it is no use lamenting; so I'll say no more on the subject of my domestic grievances, only that I caution you to take example by me, and shun wedlock. I have just left your old flame, Lady Emily Vavasour. I wish you had seen how she blushed, when I mentioned to the old folks that Lady Walmer was gone to Florence to be married. I dare be sworn, that, like me, she fancied that you were the happy bridegroom; but, *à-propos* of that, who can he be? I must go and ask Lady Arden to tell me all about it, after I return from the Faubourg St. Germain, where I am now going to inquire after the health of Mademoiselle de Bethune, who is ill, and about whom Lady Emily Vavasour is so alarmed, that I promised to bring her tidings."

"Then, we have met at a happy moment," replied Lord Heatherfield, "for I am going to the Hôtel de Bethune, to learn intelligence of my friend Desbrow, so we will be companions."

During their promenade, Lord Scamper amused Lord Heatherfield with a description of the three eventful days of the revolution, and, robbing it of all the bright colours with which its partisans had decked it, his picture had much more of the ridiculous than of the sublime in it.

The porter at the Hôtel de Bethune, in answer to the questions of Lord Heatherfield, replied that no Englishman, except

Monsieur,—pointing to Lord Scamper,—had been within the gate since Monsieur le Comte de Bethune had returned from England, and that Mademoiselle was too ill to see any one: and with this information they were obliged to be satisfied. In retracing their steps, from the Faubourg St. Germain, Lord Heatherfield reverted to the marriage of Lady Walmer: he wished Lord Scamper to announce to Lord and Lady Vavasour that *he* was *not* the husband; but he did not wish to ask him to do this, knowing how brusque and indiscreet he was. Lord Scamper, however, satisfied him on the point, by saying that he would certainly tell them that Heatherfield was not the happy man. "Though," added he archly, "I do not think you look unhappy, or disappointed either; and you are right, for you are a lucky dog, to escape being tied up—chained I ought to say —for life."

CHAPTER XL.

"It is when we most suffer, that we least doubt the existence of that power which can afflict or heal."

Cecile de Bethune had waited in trembling anxiety for the return of Madame le Moine. At one moment, she would throw herself on her couch, close her eyes, press her burning temples with her hands, and endeavour to remain quiet, till a fresh discharge of musketry startled her anew, and sent her to the window, to strain her eyes in vain to discover what was passing, and to find nought but rushing multitudes, seen through the vapoury mist of smoke, moving in confusion, and to hear the discordant yells of the mob, borne on the wind. She would sink on her knees, and offer up her prayers to that almighty Providence, in which was alone her trust, for the protection of her brother, who never seemed so dear to her as now that she trembled for his safety. How often did her thoughts revert to happy England, where the steadiness and good sense of the people offer a guarantee for the peace and prosperity of its favoured inhabitants; where the laws are respected, and the individuals of each class feel an equal advantage in supporting them; where men *reflect* before they *act*, and where good sense,

the basis of all happiness, takes the place of that intoxicating enthusiasm, which in France subverts order to establish anarchy, and, in fighting for an imaginary good, loses sight of that of which it is in possession, and, after each new effort, retrogrades still farther from the point which it seeks to obtain.

Cecile had to bear all the painful suspense and alarm that preyed upon her sinking spirits alone; her selfish father was reposing in his chamber, and the tearful Madame de la Rue was bewailing the untimely death of her *pauvre cher Coco*, and endeavouring to sooth the angry *Bijou*. Hour after hour rolled heavily away, until the exhausted Madame le Moine made her appearance; and the despair of Cecile became fixed, when she discovered that no tidings could be learnt of her brother. The agitation of so many hours produced a violent fever; and, in the morning, she was found by the faithful le Moine, with throbbing temples, burning hands, and almost incapable of replying to her anxious inquiries. When her father was informed of her illness, he declared himself the most unfortunate of men.

"No one," he said, "thought of him, or attended to his comfort. His son left him a whole day, in the most painful state of suspense, which had interfered dreadfully with his digestion, and given him the most disagreeable dreams, and now his daughter chose to make herself ill, at the moment he most required her aid to administer to his comfort. It was too bad, and enough," as he declared, "to vanquish even his philosophy."

A physician was sent for, who ordered Cecile to be kept perfectly quiet, and administered all the palliatives, with which French doctors tamper with the maladies which English practitioners attack vigorously, sometimes destroying the patient as well as the disease, while the French physician stands by to see fair play between them, only assisting his *malade*, by a certain quantity of innocent *tisanes*, which, according to him, *may* do good, and cannot do harm.

Another day of alarm passed over Paris, and its excited inhabitants, and still brought no tidings of the Comte Auguste de Bethune; but Cecile was now unconscious of all that was passing around her, for a delirium rendered her insensible of aught, save the confused images that presented themselves to her troubled imagination. She raved continually of Auguste and Desbrow, who were mingled together in all her dreams; and her father, who, more than once, on entering her darkened chamber, had heard her repeat their names, and address them in terms of the tenderest affection, muttered to himself, that

"it was strange, very strange, that she did not talk of *him*, and that Monsieur Desbrow occupied so much of her thoughts."

The third day, a man brought a few pencilled lines from Auguste, almost illegible, from the weakness of the hand that traced them, stating that he "had been wounded, but was now doing well, and carefully attended to by the good people who had received him into their house, and nursed him as if he had been their son."

Tranquillity being now, in some degree, restored, at least so far that the Comte might venture abroad in safety,—a circumstance which that prudent personage took care to ascertain before he ventured his precious person without the gate of his hotel,—he proceeded to the house on the Boulevards, indicated by his son, whom he found weak and languid from loss of blood, but now out of all danger, his surgeon having pronounced that he might be moved with perfect safety."

The first inquiries of Auguste were for his sister, of whose illness his father informed him,—not without comments on her want of philosophy, and several complacent remarks on the extent of that which he himself had displayed on the late occasion:—"I was as cool and collected as at this moment," said the egotistical Comte, "notwithstanding that I admit there was sufficient annoyance to shake a less firm mind than mine; for, independent of the alarm naturally excited by the dangers to which you, my only son, the last scion of my ancient house, and supporter of my noble name, were exposed, I felt aware that the canaille would probably turn their eyes on my hotel and person; on the first, as one of the most distinguished residences of that aristocracy which they detest; and on the second, as one of that class who they know despises their power. Though I did not belong to the ministry, which, without vanity I may say, was an unfortunate thing for the monarchy, yet I thought they would probably have attributed much of the ordinances to my counsel: and, *entre nous*, I always have advocated, and always will advocate, vigorous measures against the encroachments of the people. Had the king listened to my advice, things might be different; *mais hélas!* I fear it is *now* too late. But, to resume,—all this rendered my position peculiarly dangerous; yet I bore it with that equanimity that has always distinguished me; and, while others were either overwhelmed by fear, or wholly engrossed by the events passing around them, I had presence of mind sufficient to occupy myself in superintending—nay, I may say in assisting to prepare—a repast, which, without my efforts,

ject on you, that evidently inflicts pain. When did you last hear from Mr. Desbrow?"

"Not since ten days before the fatal revolution broke out," replied Cecile; and her cheek became as pale as marble.

"Did he not, in that letter, name the day he would arrive at Paris?" asked Auguste.

"Yes," answered his sister, "he stated he would certainly be here on the night of the 28th, and that, early next day, he should present himself at the Hôtel de Bethune. Since then, I have never heard from him," continued the gentle girl, trying to recover some degree of composure.

And now, Auguste no longer wondered at her melancholy.

"This is strange, very strange," said her brother, after musing for a few minutes. From all you have told me of Monsieur Desbrow, he is not a man to trifle with the feelings of a woman whose hand he has demanded. Nor is my Cecile a woman likely to be forgotten by one who has once loved her. That man exists not, who dares with impunity trifle with the peace of my sister."

And the blood came to the cheeks of the high-spirited Auguste, as he uttered the words.

"Oh! no, my brother," said Cecile, "Desbrow is incapable of aught approaching to dishonour, or fickleness; he is all goodness; and illness, or some other fatal cause, can alone have retarded his arrival, or prevented his writing to explain why he has not come. A doubt of his affection has never crossed my mind; but, even such a doubt, were I capable of harbouring it, would be less insupportable, than the agonizing fears I feel for his safety."

Auguste drew her to his breast, and kissed her forehead; for there was something so touching in the confidence which the pure-minded girl reposed in the affection of her lover, that it endeared her still more to the heart of her noble-minded and generous brother.

"Has my father never touched on the subject?" asked Auguste.

"No," replied Cecile; "he knew that Mr. Desbrow was to arrive on the 28th, and as my health has suffered so much since that period, his delicacy has probably prevented his reverting to his non-arrival."

Auguste was less induced to give their father much credit for delicacy, because he had known him longer, and better than had Cecile; but still he did not suspect him to be in any degree connected with the extraordinary silence of Desbrow; and,

like his sister, he feared that illness, or some fatal accident, had befallen her lover, though from her he carefully concealed this impression.

CHAPTER XLI.

"Misfortunes which have not been caused by our own misconduct, and which we may lay open to sympathy, are but as skin wounds, which are easily healed; but those which guilt has produced, and shame conceals, like the stolen prey of the Spartan boy, prey on the vitals, and the pangs must be concealed, while pressing their inflictor to the breast he feeds on."

When Lords Scamper and Heatherfield parted, it was the intention of the former to call on Lord and Lady Vavasour, to state the result of his visit to the Hôtel de Bethune; and he also intended to communicate Lord Heatherfield's arrival, as well as to state that he was not the husband of the *ci-devant* Lady Walmer: but just as he reached the Rue de Rivoli, he met his servant, who had been sent in search of him by Lady Scamper, to announce that a courier had arrived from England, with letters, demanding his immediate presence.

He and Lady Scamper were on their route to England in two hours after; the letters he had received having informed him of the dangerous illness of an uncle, whose heir he expected to be, and who required his immediate return. The consequence was, that poor Lady Emily remained undeceived in her belief that Lord Heatherfield was now the husband of Lady Walmer, as Lord Scamper had only time to write a few hasty lines to inform Lord Vavasour of his sudden departure for London, and omitted to name Heatherfield.

In a few days from this period, Lady Emily became so much worse in health, that the medical men whom her father consulted, advised her being taken to Italy by slow journeys; an advice which the anxious parents were most desirous to adopt, but which she entreated them to postpone until her dear friend Cecile was quite recovered.

At length, obtaining the welcome intelligence that the physicians of Mademoiselle de Bethune, having pronounced her to be convalescent, no longer objected to her receiving her friends, she hastened to the Faubourg St. Germain, where the two

amiable girls wept tears of pleasure at once more meeting and pouring their griefs into each other's breasts. How much had they to communicate, and with what a true sympathy did either listen to the chagrin of her friend! Their sorrows seemed to be a new bond of attachment between them; and they reflected with deep regret on their approaching separation.

Lady Emily was soon made acquainted with Auguste, and learned to appreciate his many estimable qualities, while he was so charmed with her gentleness and good sense, that he was never more happy than when forming a trio in the boudoir of his sister, during the long visits of Lady Emily.

The Comte de Bethune beheld unmoved the ravages which anxiety and suspense were producing on the health and spirits of his amiable daughter. His obtuseness prevented him from being able to judge of the intensity of her feelings; and he allowed her to pine away from day to day in a state of mind, which, had he been aware of it, even he, cold-hearted as he was, might have pitied enough to have induced him to utter the few words which would have explained all the secret of her lover's absence and silence. But in his stolid blindness and all engrossing egotism, he even congratulated himself on the success of his plan for separating the lovers, and scarcely regretted the wound which had given his son so much suffering, since its result had been to break off the proposed union that was so hateful to him. There were moments when, as Auguste de Bethune marked the pale cheek and clouded brow of his sister, his indignation became excited against Desbrow, and his proud heart panted to avenge the slight which he imagined had been offered to her; but she so continually assured him of the impossibility of her affianced husband's acting ill, that he suffered his anger to be subdued by her reasoning, and awaited with outward calm, but internal impatience, the development of Desbrow's mysterious absence and silence.

The Comte de Bethune still continued to give way to his gourmand propensities; and after dinners more suited to his epicurean palate than to a stomach weakened by intemperate indulgence, he would retire to his chamber, and, in a luxurious siesta, pass an hour previous to commencing his evening visit of condolence to his friend the Duchesse de Montcalm, who, by the recent revolution, found her salons deprived of most of her accustomed visitors. It was after a more than usually *recherché* repast, to which he had done ample justice, that, having been somewhat more than an hour asleep, his *valet-de-chambre* entered to announce that his carriage was at the

door; and on approaching his master, discovered that his slumber was that of death. Medical advice was called in, but the vital spark was extinct; and the remains of him, who had never felt but for self, were bedewed with the tears of two affectionate children, who, in spite of his errors, mourned him as if he had constituted their happiness, instead of having never considered that of any human being, save his own.

A will was found in the deceased Comte's *écritoire*, in which the most minute directions for his interment were detailed, and strict injunctions given that it should be graced with all the pomp and ceremony befitting his rank. Yet, at the period when this will was made, some four or five years prior to his death, his fortune was so limited as barely to allow him to leave a scanty pittance to his children; for he had, with that engrossing selfishness which characterized him, sunk the greater part of the sum he had received as an indemnity in an annuity for his life; his funeral expenses, therefore, were to have been deducted from the miserable portions allotted to his children. Thus did this egotist exhibit, even to the last, his two ruling passions—selfishness and vanity.

It was now that Cecile felt the inestimable value of her brother; he soothed and comforted her, attended to all her wishes, as if his sole object in life was to fulfil them, and watch over her happiness.

When the funeral had taken place, and all the necessary changes had been made in the domestic establishment, it occurred to Auguste that nothing could be so conducive to the recovery of his sister's health and peace of mind, as to accompany Lady Emily Vavasour to Italy.

The proposal was readily agreed to by Cecile, who, independent of the desire of enjoying the society of her friend, was anxious to remove her brother, whose impetuosity she dreaded, from the possibility of meeting Desbrow, until his unaccountable absence and silence should have been satisfactorily explained. That it would be, she never allowed herself to doubt, for the purity and sincerity of her own attachment, permitted her not to suspect his, though to all others his apparent forgetfulness of her might warrant suspicion.

Lord and Lady Vavasour were scarcely less gratified than their daughter, by the prospect of Cecile and her brother accompanying them to Italy; and it was consequently settled that they should depart the same day, and make their tour together. To the repeated hints of Madame de la Rue of the desire she had felt for years to see Italy, Cecile turned a deaf ear, but con-

soled her by a liberal present and a new collar for Bijou, which last delicate mark of attention was received with nearly as much gratitude as the more solid proof of Cecile's generosity. The Duchesse de Montcalm highly disapproved of the intended departure for Italy, and appeared no less surprised than mortified that her disapprobation seemed to make no change in their plans. She even observed, in pointed terms, on the want of respect it evinced towards the memory of her dear departed friend, their father; and commented on the *manque de convenances* of Mademoiselle de Bethune's travelling with her brother without the protection of a *dame de compagnie* to *chaperone* her. To Auguste's observation, that Lady Vavasour's presence obviated the necessity of any other *chaperon*, she replied, "*Pas du tout;* Lady Vavasour being English, could not discharge the various duties of a *chaperon* to a young French lady, the usages of the two countries being wholly different. She, therefore, advised that they should take with them Madame de la Rue, who she was sure would not object to go."

The counsel was not without a motive, for the Duchess very much dreaded Madame de la Rue's coming back as a fixture to her old apartment in the Hôtel de Montcalm. But her advice had no longer any weight in the family de Bethune, and she never was so sincere in her regret for the death of its head, as when she discovered that it deprived her of the power of governing Cecile, and of interfering in her movements. She was scarcely civil when the sister and brother bade her farewell, and they were most philosophically indifferent to her feelings on the subject.

Cecile consulted Lord Vavasour as to the mode of having a deed of settlement drawn, to insure her brother the half of her fortune during her life, and the reversion of the whole at her decease. Nor would she leave Paris until this deed was executed, though she took care to conceal her intention from Auguste until it was regularly carried into effect. She had much difficulty in persuading this generous and high-spirited young man to accept her gift; and it was not until she had appeared deeply wounded by his reluctance, and affected to view it as a proof of his want of affection for her, that he consented. This removed a load of anxiety from her mind, and she now entered into the preparations for her departure from Paris, with a lighter heart, though still oppressed with grief for her recent loss and anxiety about Desbrow.

The grief which the sensitive Cecile experienced for the death of her father, was mingled with, or perhaps wholly composed

of, remorse for not having sufficiently loved or valued him during life. Now that he was no longer before her, to disgust by his selfishness, or to *ennuyer* her by his absurd national prejudices, she forgot that either had been his prevailing characteristic; and gave him credit for qualities, for his possession of which she drew more largely on her imagination than on her memory. She wept for the father she *could* have loved and respected, rather than for him whose errors had embittered the brief period they had passed together; and her gentle nature lent to his memory a brighter hue, than her experience had ever been able to give to his actual existence.

Auguste had sent in his resignation, being determined no longer to serve in an army, which, like the old Prætorian guard, was ready to assist the most powerful candidate for the crown; and to transfer its allegiance from one sovereign to another, with the same facility with which it would change its uniform. The imperial eagle, the snowy lily, or the tri-coloured ensign, were all the same to them; but, as he could not acquire their Protean qualities, he left them for ever, having certain old-fashioned notions, ycleped principles, which he could not desert, but which the boasted march of intellect had taught so many of his contemporaries to forget or disdain. An oath with him was a sacred thing, and the one of service he had made to Charles the Tenth, he could only transfer to his legitimate successor.

Much as he loved France, he was not sorry to leave it at the present moment, when the people, intoxicated with the triumph they had gained, thought more of displaying than of using it soberly, to secure to themselves those rights, in the hope of obtaining which they had upset one monarchy and erected another. Young and inexperienced as was the Comte de Bethune, he saw enough to make him tremble for the happiness of his country, when that happiness depended on the will of the fickle multitude, who so easily can be made the engine of the ambitious and designing. And he prophesied that Louis Philippe would with impunity attack that liberty which Charles the Tenth lost his crown for merely attempting to infringe.

It was on a fine day, in the early part of August, that two travelling carriages, containing the family of Lord Vavasour, and the de Bethunes, (Auguste and Cecile,) left Paris for Switzerland, on their route to Italy. Though the roses of health no longer bloomed on the cheeks of our heroines, they still offered two as exquisite specimens of beauty as could be seen; and left nought to the beholder to desire, except that a little

more red might mingle with the almost snowy paleness of their complexions, and that smiles would show more frequently the dimples that were wont in other days to play round their lips.

CHAPTER XLII.

" Il n'y a que les montagnes qui ne se rencontrent jamais."

When Lord Heatherfield left Lord Scamper, he again betook him to a search after his friend Desbrow, and was returning to his hotel fatigued and disheartened, at not being able to hear any tidings of him, when his *voiture de remise* broke down, and he was precipitated with such force against the step that he sprained his ankle. On arriving at his hotel it was found to be so swollen and inflamed, that the surgeon who had been summoned to examine it, ordered him not to leave his bed, except for a sofa, until the swelling and inflammation had subsided. Never could a sentence of confinement have been so irksome to him as at this moment! when within a short distance of her who occupied all his thoughts, and into whose presence he hoped soon to have been admitted. He tried to walk when the surgeon had left him, but found every attempt at motion brought on such acute pain, that nothing was left him but to submit to be a prisoner for some days.

He looked forward with anxious impatience to seeing Lord Scamper, and to hearing how Lord and Lady Vavasour and their charming daughter had received the intelligence that he was at Paris, and free, and that Lady Walmer was married to another. Every step that approached his door during the first two days must be, he thought, that of Lord Scamper; but when the third day passed by, without his making his appearance, Lord Heatherfield, unable any longer to support his anxiety, dispatched a note to his hotel, to apprise him of his accident, and to request to see him as soon as possible. To his inexpressible disappointment, the note was brought back, with the intelligence that Lord Scamper had set off suddenly for England, three days before; and here ended all his hopes of receiving any intelligence through him.

Three tedious weeks had rolled away, ere Lord Heatherfield was able to walk, even with the assistance of a cane; but the moment he could move, his first visit was to the British embassy, where, to his unspeakable surprise, he learnt that Mr. Desbrow had obtained a passport for Italy two days before, and had left Paris. He ascertained the hotel where his friend had resided, and proceeded there immediately, to gain intelligence respecting him. The master of the hotel was absent, and all he could learn was, that Mr. Desbrow had been there for some weeks, confined to his bed by severe indisposition, and had set out for Italy two days before, to travel by easy journeys, as he was still too weak to bear the fatigue of quick posting.

Lord Heatherfield determined immediately on pursuing him; and, having procured his passport, was on the route early the next morning, resolved to travel with all speed until he could overtake his friend. The evening before his departure, he read in a French paper the account of the marriage of Lady Walmer at Florence, with the Prince Romano. This confirmation of Lord Scamper's news was a balm to his heart, and cheered his spirits so much that he could not resist again forming anticipations of happiness. He sent to the hotel to inquire if Lord Vavasour and family were still there; not that he dared, uncalled, present himself before them, but that he wished to know something of their movements before he departed: but his messenger returned with the intelligence, that the family had left Paris that day, and as it was not stated where they had gone to, Lord Heatherfield concluded that they had returned to England, and so left Paris with less regret, now that it no longer contained his beloved Emily.

He travelled the whole of the day and night that followed his departure from Paris, and arrived the next morning at ——, where he ordered breakfast. While it was being prepared, he sat near a window looking into a garden belonging to the auberge, and his attention was drawn to a lady and gentleman who were walking there. The gentleman gave his arm to the lady, and seemed anxiously attending to what she was saying. The singular beauty of the man struck him; and something in the air of the lady, who, though wrapped in a pelisse, still showed a certain grace and elegance in her motions that seemed familiar to him, rivetted his attention; when, as they drew near to the open window, the well known tones of Lady Emily Vavasour's voice struck on his ear. At that moment, the waiter entered with his breakfast, and Lord Heatherfield

quickly and nervously pointing to the lady and gentleman in the garden, demanded who they were.

The waiter replied, that he had forgotten their names, but that they were English, had arrived the night before, and were going on in an hour; and added, with that archness peculiar to French waiters, "Monsieur le Mari," pointing to Auguste, "had not badly chosen, for madame was one of the handsomest ladies he had ever seen, though a little suffering:" the possible cause of which he playfully touched upon, and for which Lord Heatherfield felt at the moment as if he could have annihilated him, though he doubted not the truth of at least a part of his statement. That Emily could be there alone, with any man who was not her husband, he deemed impossible; and that she *was* there—alas! his eyes bore witness, for he had seen her face as well as heard her voice. In the agitation which this painful discovery occasioned, it never occurred to him to ask whether monsieur and madame had any companions on their journey—no, he had seen them alone, and therefore, if the disturbance of his mind enabled him to form any reflection whatever, he concluded they were travelling alone. His breakfast, consequently, was sent away untouched—post-horses were ordered out forthwith, and he threw himself into his carriage in a state of anguish that might have excited pity even in an enemy. Had he waited only five minutes longer, he would have seen Lord and Lady Vavasour, with Mademoiselle de Bethune, join Lady Emily and her companion, for they had seated themselves on a bench at the far end of the garden, while Auguste gave his arm to Lady Emily to continue her walk. Had Lord Heatherfield's ancient *valet-de-chambre* been with him, he would have probably been recognised by some of Lord Vavasour's servants, and so would have learned the movements of the family; but he had left his master in England, and the servants who now composed the suite of his lordship were all foreigners, who knew nothing of the Vavasour family, and nearly as little of that of their present lord, their knowledge being confined to the fact that he was *un Milord Anglais très-riche*, and that he was called "Milord Hathenfeldt," which was the nearest assimilation to his title that their stubborn organs of speech could attain. But names have little weight with foreign servants, who seem to be of the gentle Juliet's opinion, when she asked, "What's in a name?"—It is the purse, and not the cognomen of their employer, that interests them; and as long as they can draw on the one, they care little for the other.

Lord Heatherfield overtook his friend Desbrow the night of the third day of his journey, and was shocked to witness the ravages that illness had produced on his frame. He was scarcely to be recognised, and was still so weak that Heatherfield felt seriously alarmed for his final recovery.

The meeting between the friends was most affectionate. Heatherfield reproached Desbrow for not having immediately informed him of his change of projects, and of his illness.

"Could you have doubted," said he, "of my coming to you immediately, and accompanying you, as I now intend to do, wherever you go, until your health is restored?"

"My illness," replied Desbrow, "attacked me the day after my luckless, fatal arrival at Paris;" and here he shuddered involuntarily. "The moment I could leave that wretched place I set out, and though I wished to have you with me, you can imagine why I also wished to keep you from Italy."

"Congratulate me, my friend," said Heatherfield, "for no longer does any reason exist why I should shun Italy. Lady Walmer is married to an Italian prince."

"I am, indeed, delighted to hear it," said Desbrow, and a faint smile flitted over his pale countenance, as he recollected his own prediction of that lady's forming another attachment; "then, now, my dear friend, there can be no obstacle to your marriage with Lady Emily."

"Name it not," replied Lord Heatherfield, changing countenance; "alas! that now can never be, for she is the wife of another. I saw them yesterday, she was leaning fondly on his arm, just as she used once to lean on mine, and pouring into his enraptured ears the delicious tones of that musical voice, which I have so often recalled to memory in the silence of night. I questioned a servant at the hotel where I beheld them, pointing to them as they walked in the garden, beautiful as our first parents ere they had known sin, while I felt almost as envious as the serpent that tempted Eve. The man remembered not their names; they had arrived only the night before, and were to pursue their journey immediately; but he jested on the good taste of Monsieur *le Mari*, and on the probable cause of the delicacy of health of madame; and *this*, to *me*, Desbrow—to me who would have given worlds to be in that husband's place!"

"But, surely, you would have heard something of their marriage at Paris," said Desbrow; "the position and rank of the parties *must* have led to its being a topic of discourse."

"I was confined to my chamber by a sprained ankle during

three weeks," replied Lord Heatherfield; "I saw no one, except a French surgeon, and heard nothing. The night before I left, I sent to the hotel, where they had been staying, and there, my servant learned that they had quitted Paris. It is now clear that Lord and Lady Vavasour returned to England, and that Lady Emily and her husband are on their route to Italy. Let us not recur to them again, my dear Desbrow, it unmans me; for *you* know not, *I* did not myself know, how I loved her, until I had lost her for ever, and at the period too, when I thought Lady Walmer's marriage had removed every obstacle to my again seeking her hand."

"All this appears so strange and unaccountable," said Desbrow, after a moment's pause, "that I cannot help thinking that some misconception exists. Lady Emily, from all that I have heard of her by one who knows her well, would not be likely to transfer her affections to another so soon after they had been placed on you; nor would she bestow her hand without them."

"Alas! my dear friend, I cannot, dare not, cheat myself into hope on this subject—let us drop it. But you,—what has broken off your marriage with Mademoiselle de Bethune? She was very ill at Paris when I called at the hotel of her father to inquire after you."

"Ill, did you say," asked Desbrow, "This intelligence alone was wanted to complete my unhappiness. But, how could it be otherwise, after such a blow—a blow that at once destroyed her happiness and mine? Do not question me further at present, my dear friend; one day you shall know all; but now, I dare not enter on the subject. All I can tell you is, that Cecile is dearer to me than life, but that a dreadful circumstance has occurred by which we are separated for ever."

The friends pursued their route in the same carriage, and having remained a few days at Dijon, they did not again encounter the party of Lord Vavasour, who had taken another route.

The sympathy that existed between Lord Heatherfield and Desbrow rendered them still dearer, and more necessary than ever to each other. They mutually tried to turn their attention from the painful subjects which had lately so embittered their lives, and by the time they had reached the lake of Como, where they intended sojourning for a few weeks, they had regained some portion of their former composure, though their secret griefs still rankled at their hearts. The health of Desbrow became better, and though Lord Heatherfield was still

a little lame, he could walk without pain, and, supported by the arm of his friend, would ramble round the beautiful environs of Como.

CHAPTER XLIII.

"Le monde méprise assez généralement ce qui rampe effrayé devant lui. Souvent ce qui le brave, il l'absout."

It is long since we have reverted to the ci-devant Lady Walmer, whom we left at Florence, where she stayed but a few days, as the quantity of English there, and their peculiar mode of staring at her and her party, led her to think that it would be wise to abridge the period of her sojourn in their vicinity. The Princess Barberini had remarked more than once, that it was strange her *cara amica* did not meet any friends among the crowds of her compatriots whom they encountered every day; and had several times commented on the rude habit of staring which the English had lately adopted. Every remark of this kind brought the colour to the cheeks of the bride, and she endured pangs of humiliated pride, known only to the proud but guilty mind,—which, conscious of meriting reprobation, shrinks from its infliction, and receives with anger, instead of penitence, the punishment induced by misconduct. There were many noble families at Florence with whom the Princess Romano had formerly been on habits of close intimacy; they now pointedly avoided her, or else stared at her, with glances in which curiosity or contempt were more evident than good-will. Not a single incident of this kind escaped the observation of this unfortunate woman; she seemed to be endued with an intuitive prescience on such occasions, and never saw a group of English without a heightened colour, and increased pulsation of the heart. She grieved for the *consequences* of her misconduct, but not for the misconduct; hence she resented as injuries the sense manifested of it by her former acquaintances, and calling up pride to her aid, she returned their glances with haughty looks of contempt, which only served to render them still more ill-disposed towards her. The few days she had passed at Florence—the bridal days—which in general are considered among the brightest in woman's life, had been days

of bitterness to the Princess Romano. And though she endeavoured to conceal what was passing in her breast from those around her, and even to assume a cheerfulness she was far from feeling, the effects of the mortification hourly inflicted on her were but too visible in her manner. She became abstracted, impatient, and peevish by turns; and the Princess Barberini observed to her husband, that the poor Prince Romano had dearly earned the immense fortune of his wife, by being condemned to submit to her capricious temper.

The bridegroom was not slow at discovering that his bride was far from being the amiable person he had believed her to be. Still her personal beauty, which had the gloss of novelty to recommend it, excited his admiration; and her fortune, which was the principal point of attraction to him, consoled him for the defects in her temper, which were but too apparent. The want of solid mental acquirements in her companions, which had hitherto escaped her attention, now that she was thrown for some days wholly into their society, struck her with astonishment. They knew nothing of the history of their own country, and in accompanying her to view the many interesting objects that Florence contains, seemed more surprised than gratified at the extent of her knowledge of the different events, which gave additional interest to the spots where they occurred, and which she referred to on gazing on them. The frivolity of her ill-educated, but well-bred husband, disgusted her; and, when she was descanting on the munificence of the Medici, while admiring the treasures of art they had collected, or examining with the eye of a connoisseur some exquisite bijou from the hand of Benvenuto Cellini, he would refer with infinite *onction* to some modern trinket that he had seen at a jeweller's, or talk encomiastically of a picture so bad as scarcely even to be worthy of reprobation.

In a day or two after their return to Milan, ere yet the newmade wife had enjoyed the display of her bridal pomp, the Prince demanded her attention while he laid before her an *exposé* of the dilapidated state of his finances. He detailed the advantage to be acquired by liberating certain estates, whose revenues at present had passed into the greedy hands of usurers, or the scarcely less grasping ones of nominal friends. "A hundred thousand pounds would," he coolly added, "free him from *some* of the most urgent and clamorous of his creditors, and give a considerable addition to his income, by redeeming a portion of his estates from the mortgages which at present were devouring them. As for the rest of his creditors, they

would probably consent to wait, if his *cara amica* (kissing his wife's hand) would assign a part of her income for their liquidation."

The Princess heard him in silence, for surprise, in the first moment, and anger, in the second, deprived her of utterance. She saw that she had married a ruined man, and the conviction that he had wedded her for her fortune burst upon her with fearful force. Her anger got the mastery of her prudence, and she vented reproaches, "not loud but deep," which proved to her husband that to *his* reputed fortune, and *not* to *her* affection, as his vanity had led him to believe, did he owe the honour of her hand. She told him, with more of malicious triumph than feminine sympathy in her manner, that her whole fortune consisted of but four thousand a year, which would expire with her, and that this sum was barely sufficient to enable her to live in the style to which she had been accustomed.

"I admit this," said the Prince, "but am I to conclude that you will make no sacrifice whatever to redeem my honour? I have play debts to many of my friends—to the Prince Barberini, for instance, I owe a considerable sum, which he expects to receive immediately. The fame of your immense wealth, which was as little doubted by my friends as by myself, has led all my creditors to calculate on payment as soon as we were married. If they are disappointed, dishonour and a prison await me; from both, you may yet save me, by signing certain papers. Think of the triumph to our enemies—and your beauty has raised up a host—to see us, ere yet we have dazzled them by our nuptial splendour, disgraced and humiliated. You see the preparations I have made, that you might take that place at the head of the society at Milan, to which your charms and my station entitle you; will you, can you, allow all these magnificent preparations to be useless? nay, to serve as marks of our disgrace, when, by merely signing some papers, all may be saved? I am heir to my uncle, the Prince Cesarini; he is old and infirm, and his fortune must soon be mine, so that I can then redeem your name, by paying the debts for which you will now sign it, and I shall owe my happiness to you."

The entreaties of her husband, and (but, alas! that we should be obliged to avow it,) the temptations of vanity, still more than his entreaties, induced the weak-minded Princess Romano to sign all the papers he presented to her. She looked around, and, in imagination, saw the splendid salons,

newly and magnificently decorated to do honour to her, and in which she was to receive the homage of all the *élite* of the Milanese society. No, she could not resist the temptation of shining once more, though her reason whispered her, that her brilliancy must soon be eclipsed by poverty and ruin. In spite, however, of her conviction, this unprincipled woman, for the gratification of her vanity, sacrificed not only her fortune, but ultimately her personal freedom—sacrifices, which affection would never have led her to make.

And now, all was gaiety and splendour in the Palazzo Romano. All the noble Milanese families, with the greater part of whom the Prince was nearly connected, flocked round his bride; costly wedding presents were showered on her with a profusion that indicated the donors' belief of her power of repaying them by gifts of far higher price.

Balls, fêtes, and banquets, of almost regal splendour, were given in succession, by the new-married couple; and, in a few weeks, the Princess Romano found herself the acknowledged leader of fashionable society at Milan. She was consulted and appealed to by all, on matters of etiquette: her look was a fiat, and her word a law. Nor did she bear her honours meekly. No, she must remodel the society—she must establish the same exclusive system which has been so judiciously adopted in London, and whose effects on society have been to destroy that which it was meant to improve. Her zeal was as indefatigable as it was ill judged, and subjected so many persons to vexations and petty humiliations, that it raised up a host of enemies, for her who had so much occasion to cultivate friends. She subverted the whole machine of society, which had hitherto moved so smoothly, because inequalities were unknown; and the unsophisticated Milanese could not understand, why lines of demarcation were now to be drawn, excluding many of those who had hitherto formed but one circle. In vain they referred to their ancient descent, marriages, and intermarriages, through generations of noble blood; they were pronounced by the Princess to be bores (or to have *mauvais ton*), and consequently to be unfit for the exclusive circle she wished to form. Heart-burnings, jealousies, and quarrels, followed the innovations of the female dictator, each day rendering her more unpopular, and widening the breach between her and the persons she had excluded. Her husband, who was a good-natured, though unthinking man, endeavoured to point out to her the evils of the course she was pursuing; but, like all weak people, she was pertinaciously

attached to her own opinions, and refused to listen to his representations.

The friends and connexions of many of those whom the Princess had made parias in her circle, were amongst the creditors of her husband, and certain of the bills she had signed fell into the hands of those who had angry feelings towards her. For some time, they forbore, from a lingering sentiment of good-will towards the Prince, to take advantage of the power of revenging the slights put upon them by his wife; while the vain and heartless woman unthinkingly pursued her reckless career of insolence and extravagance, their patience and intentions of forbearance daily diminished. So few English came to Milan, that having hitherto escaped any disagreeable contact with them, she had now ceased to think of her compatriots with dread, and imagined that her despotic empire at Milan was too firmly established to admit of their being able to shake it.

The husband, as thoughtless and unprincipled as his wife, had contracted fresh debts, and by misrepresentations relative to her fortune, had gained temporary credit, which only added to the difficulties with which he had been embarrassed previously to his marriage, and which now were overwhelming him by the accumulation of principal and interest. The tradespeople furnished his palazzo with all the necessaries and luxuries he required, taking care to charge in proportion to the risk of payment,—a system quite as well understood, by that class, on the other side of the Alps, as in more civilized London: and his numerous establishment, not being in the habit of receiving their wages, thought themselves entitled to commit as much waste as they could, as a set-off against the sums due to them,—not that they were willing to forego even the least part of their claims: on the contrary, they loudly and frequently reiterated them to the secretary and major-domo of his excellency the Prince, which reiterations only drew forth sundry shrugs of the shoulders, turnings up of the eyes, and *che volete, non abbiamo denari*, from these respectable personages, who having amassed a considerable sum by their rapacious extortions on the purse of their prodigal master, were careless of the fate of him they had plundered. Each domestic, under the plea of not being paid, brought his wife and children to the palazzo, where they fared sumptuously, and thanklessly, at the expense of its improvident master, whose establishment was, by this means, increased threefold; so that his princely revenues, had they been still at his command free and unincumbered, would not have sufficed to

defray the ruinous extravagance practised beneath his roof. Not only were the families of his menials maintained at his expense, but their friends and acquaintances, and the friends of their friends, were every day feasted in the Palazzo Romano; while these very plunderers, who were thus ruinously expending thousands, severely commented on every new purchase made by the Prince and Princess, as unpardonable acts of extravagance. There was not a single domestic in their suite who felt either respect or gratitude towards them; yet both were kind and easy to their servants, who looked on their culpable indulgence without thanks, while they resented even the appearance of severity with murmur and reproaches. Such was the establishment of the Prince Romano, and the ill-ordered home of her, who, a year before, was mistress of one of the best regulated houses in England.

CHAPTER XLIV.

And is it thus we meet in a strange land?
We who were once the world unto each other!
What, not a word of greeting?
Our hearts converse, although our lips are silent;
Or why this deep emotion that I feel,
Or that deep blush that dies thy pallid cheek?

The friends highly enjoyed their *séjour* at Como, and passed many an hour on its beautiful lake, and in examining its romantic environs. Often did they pause to look on the ruins of the Castle of Baradello, whence, in the year 1277, Sforza had the barbarity to suspend a cage, in which he imprisoned his conquered foe, the celebrated Torriani, who, exposed to all the inclemency of such a stormy region, perished while gazing on those beautiful and vast domains, of which he had once been the proud master. Nor did they forget, that in this lovely spot, which seems as if only formed to soften the heart of man by displaying the works of his Creator in their most beautiful aspect, superstition and bigotry had marked their fearful reign; and their terrific engine, the inquisition, had here sacrificed hundreds of victims to its vengeance.

After Lord Heatherfield and his friend Desbrow had passed a month at Como, they decided on going to Milan; and the day previous to their departure, Heatherfield having letters to write, Desbrow strolled along by the borders of the beautiful lake, and, tempted by the fineness of the day, he entered a boat, and was rowed by his barcaroli on its glassy bosom. The awning and curtains were drawn to exclude the sun; and he amused himself with a book while he reclined on the cushions. The splashing of oars passing close to his boat attracted his attention,—but how did it become rivetted when he heard a voice, whose tones thrilled to his very heart, uttering words of tenderness to some one! He partially drew aside the curtain, and beheld Cecile—his Cecile—supported by the arm of another, and that other, one of the handsomest young men he had ever seen. He sunk back on the seat, almost overcome by the intensity of his emotions. Rage, jealousy, and love, strove for mastery in his agitated breast. Had she then so soon, so very soon forgotten him?—and could she wed another so shortly after the death of her brother? And yet, that she was married, admitted not of a doubt,—how otherwise could she be alone with the handsome man he saw, or utter the words of tenderness he heard her address to him? It was all but too clear, she was the wife of another! and he was miserable. He ordered the boatman to return home, and entered the house a prey to the most violent emotions.

He sought Heatherfield and related what he had seen, entreating him to fix their departure for an early hour of the morrow, as he dreaded the possibility of again meeting her who had never ceased to occupy all his thoughts. Lord Heatherfield could offer him no consolation, because he believed that the presence of Cecile with the handsome stranger proved that she was married.

And now, for the first time, did Desbrow acquaint him with the dreadful catastrophe at Paris, and the letter from the father of Cecile. He was both shocked and grieved at the melancholy tale; and if he could not dispel the wretchedness of his friend, he at least soothed it by his sympathy.

They set off for Milan at an early hour the next morning, happy to escape the chance of another interview with her to whom the thoughts of Desbrow reverted with a frequency and a bitterness known only to those, who having tried to banish one prevalent idea from the mind, have found it recur still more pertinaciously in spite of every effort. The similarity of the position of both friends, each supposing the object of his

affection to have become the wife of a stranger, united them still more strongly. Sincere and mutual was the sympathy, abstraction, and melancholy then excited; and neither of them was *gêné* by the presence of the other, from the consciousness of the congeniality of their feelings.

They had not been two days in Milan, when they met the English minister from Naples, who had only arrived the day before on his route to England, and meant to stop a few days. He requested them to accompany him that evening to a *soirée* given by the Princess Boromeo; and pressed them so much, that though little inclined to gaiety, they at length consented. He called for them at the hour fixed; and having presented them in due form to the mistress of the Palazzo Boromeo, he led them through the superb suite of apartments, hung with some of the many chef-d'œuvres of art, which render Italy a land of attraction to all who know how to appreciate the pictures and statues with which it abounds.

Lord Heatherfield stopped in one of the rooms to admire an exquisite group by Canova, while his friend paused before a Titian, whose warm and beautiful colouring delighted him. While Lord Heatherfield was admiring the group, some person behind him was pointing out its perfections to another: the remarks displayed such a knowledge and love of art, that, involuntarily, he turned round to look at the judicious critic, and his eyes encountered those of the Lady Emily Vavasour, while in her companion he recognised the handsome man who had been pointed out to him, as her husband, by the waiter at ——. Rapid as was the glance he cast at her, he saw the colour mount to her very temples. He moved quickly away, and left the palazzo, desiring his *laquais de place* to inform Mr. Desbrow that he had gone home.

Desbrow, wishing to call the attention of his friend to the admirable picture he had been admiring, was returning to the place where he had left him, when he saw Cecile leaning on the arm of the same handsome stranger with whom he had seen her in the boat, on the Lake of Como, three days before. Both were hurrying along, while the stranger was telling her something in a low voice, that seemed to excite a strong interest, by the effect it produced on her countenance. She did not see Desbrow, for her attention was wholly occupied by her companion; but he had narrowly observed her, brief as was the moment allowed him for observation, and he remarked that she was thinner and paler than in former days, and that she was in deep mourning. He felt that it would be cruel to her,

and too great a trial for himself to run the risk of again meeting her, so he hurried from the room, and left the house a few minutes after his friend, whom he found at the alberga, in a state of visible agitation.

"I have seen her again," said Lord Heatherfield, "and with her happy husband."

"And I," replied Desbrow, "have seen Cecile on the arm of her's, which drove me away. A fatality seems to pursue us. Let us leave Milan to-morrow," continued Desbrow; "for I would not again encounter her, for the world."

At an early hour the next morning, the friends were in their carriages, anxious to escape from the persons dearest to them on earth, and little aware that they were flying from happiness.

They proceeded towards Venice, staying a few days at Verona on the route; where they admired the amphitheatre, that splendid remnant of a former age, so creditable to the reign of Trajan, and the wonderful state of preservation of which permits one to judge of its pristine beauty, without drawing any longer drafts on our veneration for antiquity than may be acquitted at sight,— a merit possessed but by few similar objects of interest in Italy. They visited the reputed sarcophagus of "Romeo and Juliet;" but not all their romantic feelings and sympathy for the lovers could lead them to believe, that the rudely-formed trough, cut in stone, without a single ornament, exhibited to them in a vineyard by an old woman, whose garrulity was enough to put sentiment and the powers of association to flight, could ever have been the resting-place of the gentle Juliet and her enamoured Romeo.

Some less incredulous English—an elderly couple, who looked like a citizen and his wife—were viewing it at the same time, and the man observed aloud, "That the poor bodies must have had scarcely room enough, though, to be sure, they were but young when they died, and young people are seldom fat;" and here the speaker suffered his eyes to dwell for a moment on a certain prominent rotundity of his person, and then glanced at one of nearly similar dimensions appertaining to his elderly wife, as though he were debating the possibility of their ever reposing in the sarcophagus before them. The good lady seemed to understand what was passing in his mind, for she looked kindly at him, and placed her arm within his, with a certain cordiality that seemed to express the hope that it might be long ere they were consigned to their last rest.

"Little did we think, my dear," said the husband, "when

we saw Miss O'Neill play Juliet, that ever we should be looking into the stone coffin of the real Juliet. Well, well; you remember, my dear, when I tried to stop you from crying so much, by telling you that it was all an imagination of Shakspeare's; who'd have thought of our coming to the very town where the real tragedy happened, and seeing the very coffin the lovers were buried in!"

The old cicerone observing, with the acuteness of her profession, that the elderly couple before her were more gullible than Heatherfield and Desbrow, directed her attention chiefly to them; and after some whispering with their *laquais de place*, an offer was made to them, of which he was the interpreter, that a lock of Juliet's hair might be had for a certain sum. The offer was immediately accepted, and the friends left the sentimental old couple exchanging their piastres for a mesh of tangled hair, whose coarse texture denoted that it had never graced a gentle head, if, indeed, it had not owed its origin to the old cicerone's; and after being looked at with reverence, it was carefully consigned to the bulky pocket-book of the husband, and placed next his passport and letter of credit.

There is perhaps no more effectual mode of allaying the bitterness of disappointed affection, than by dwelling on the works of antiquity that have withstood the attacks of ages. Since those stupendous monuments were reared, over which time has passed, scathing, but not destroying, what changes have occurred in the moral and physical world! And we, who stand gazing on them, creatures of a day, are fated to pass away as thousands and thousands have passed, who have stood admiring them as we do now. How trifling—how transitory appear our griefs, when we reflect on ourselves as only composing an almost imperceptible portion of the myriads of shadows that are rapidly flitting away!

This thought occurred to both the friends when they again visited the amphitheatre by moonlight, and their melancholy became softened, if not subdued, by the reflection.

"How many men, remarkable for their learning and talents, have stood where we now stand," said Heatherfield, breaking the silence which both, occupied with their meditations, had preserved for the last hour; "how rich in names is Verona—Catullus, Nepos, Vitruvius! What associations in poetry, history, and architecture! And when the cloud that overshadowed the dark ages had passed away, Verona again produced her great men to regenerate literature—Guarini, Calde-

rini, Valla, Politian, Scaliger, father and son, Pauvisines, Fracastorius, and a host of others. Well do such names accord with the monument before us, and how widely does their beneficent influence extend! How far may the minds of the revivers of letters have been influenced by the contemplation of the splendid wrecks of antiquity which their native city boasts! For when we regard objects that appeal to us so forcibly from the past, is it not natural to wish to leave behind us works which may bequeath our names to posterity, and associate them with the memory of those scenes dear to us in life? Scaliger, the father, has always appeared to me a most interesting character," continued Heatherfield, musingly; "a youth passed in camps, and a maturity in study, seems such a philosophical transition."

"Yes," replied Desbrow, "I admit that one reflects with complacency on his life; but how can you reconcile his petulant attack on Erasmus with the equanimity which a practitioner in medicine, and an expounder of divinity ought to possess?"

"Alas!" said Heatherfield, "it is but another proof of the fallibility of poor human nature; proofs from which so few of the wisest or best have been exempt."

"It is this perfect freedom from all the alloys of genius that makes me turn with such delight to our own Scott," said Desbrow; "there is a mighty mind, unsullied by a single example of envy, hatred, or jealousy. Placed on an eminence to which all eyes are directed, even the Argus optics of envy can discover no blemish in him. Unspoiled by praise, and unscathed by censure, his is indeed a brilliant career, and the admiration accorded to the author, seems but to increase the affection felt towards the man. But then Scott's nature has never been tried by censure, that corrosive acid which has turned the milk of human kindness of so many into gall. When he commenced his literary career, critics were more disposed to give praise for the merit a work displayed, than to search with hypercritical acumen for its blemishes. His early fame came to him gradually—it was a stream, each year becoming more vigorous, to which all accustomed themselves, and not a flood that astonished and alarmed the vanity of competitors, by threatening to ingulf them. What a profound knowledge of human nature did he evince, when for years he concealed that he was the author of the Waverley novels! The praise so universally, so justly bestowed on these admirable works, could not have failed to have raised up a host of jealous foes against an avowed author, however faultless his life, and however brilliant his genius. But Scott fought for and won the high guerdon of renown, as

did the heroes of chivalry, with their visors down, and the victory was proclaimed before the victor was known."

"Then you are of opinion that authors would do well to preserve the incognito," said Heatherfield.

"I think they would do wisely," replied Desbrow, "for then their works would be read without those feelings of prejudice, envy, malice, and uncharitableness, which influence but too great a portion of their readers when perusing successful works. The real or imagined faults of authors, as men, would not be mixed up with the criticisms on their works; and who can say how far the criticisms might be influenced by the critic's total ignorance of the author? Writers, by preserving the incognito until the reputations of their works were perfectly established, would enjoy all the gratification of authorship, without its concomitant annoyances; and fame would at last find them unwounded by the slings and arrows of envy, that never fail to be aimed at him who, unmasked, enters the lists to fight for it."

"How different was the fate of Byron," said Heatherfield, "who was never permitted to bathe his fevered lips in the intoxicating cup of praise, without finding the wormwood bitterness of censure steeped so strongly in it, that he turned disgusted from the draught for which his soul panted. Scott is a beneficent genius, instructing and ameliorating, while he amuses; but Byron showed mankind only the depths and miseries of their nature, without pointing out one bright vista of consolation, and left them more wretched, and, alas! oftener more wicked, than when he found them. I never read one of those biting satires which poor Byron loved to introduce even in the most impassioned of his poems, without thinking of a passage I met with in a French writer—'Ah! plaignez-moi. Je fronde mes semblables, je ris de leurs malheurs; c'est une satire d'amertume et un rire de grincement de dents; et cette arme avec laquelle je les frappe, je la retire de ma propre blessure.'"

"Byron, one of the giants of literature, has now passed away," said Desbrow, "while the innumerable pygmies of it are spared, as the blast that bows the majestic oak, the pride of the forest, to the earth, passes harmlessly over the dwarf shrubs at its base."

"Yes," replied Heatherfield; "Byron and Scott may be said to be giants in literature, and their works will remain to astonish posterity, as do now the fossil remains of colossal animals whose species is extinct; and which, conveying such impressions

of the stupendous grandeur of the period to which they belonged, make us sensible of the degeneration of the present. Should the works of the pygmies pass down to posterity, they will excite the same feeling that we indulge on discovering shells and other light productions, beneath the surface of high mountains; we value them not, but, as on seeing the fly in amber, wonder how they got there; so will posterity conclude, that the works, like the shells, were preserved by their lightness, which allowed them to float down the stream of time unharmed."

"Byron was, and Scott is, so much a part of our age," said Desbrow, "that it is difficult to believe that one has indeed passed away; and even this feeling is a proof of the power of genius. The scenes with which both are identified will be sacred, and holy spots for ages to come; and many a worshipper of their genius will make pilgrimages to them. Who can say that a presentiment of this may not have often soothed the angry feelings of Byron, when writhing under those censures, which he loved to call down on his own head, but had not fortitude to support? As to Scott, he has no need to look for consolation from posthumous fame—the whole of Europe are his admirers, and his admirers could not fail to be his friends, such are the effects his writings produce. Rare and happy are the authors who, while captivating the admiration of their readers, excite also their esteem and good-will, and this happiness Scott possesses in an eminent degree."

"Yet we have still some authors, who prove that we are not degenerating," said Heatherfield, "and I could name writers in whose works I can point out passages so deeply imbued with all that is finest in ethics, and most admirable in feeling, that the cynical censors who would deny their excellence, must be content to pass for obtuse and incapable critics. Had the works of the writers I refer to come before the public without the names of the authors, I cannot help thinking that the praise bestowed on them would have been less chary, and the censures more sparing. The politics, the habits, the peculiarities of the authors, could then have no influence on the judgments formed of their works, and living writers might enjoy some portion of that well-earned fame, that is rarely accorded them until death has removed them from the contest."

CHAPTER XLV.

" En songeant qu'il faut l'oublier,
Elle s'en souvient."

Lord Vavasour and his party had remained a few weeks in Switzerland, and then crossed the Alps. Anxious to see the Lake of Como before the season was more advanced, they proceeded there, little doubting that they were retracing the steps of two persons so interested in, and so interesting to, at least two individuals of their party. They had arrived at Como a week before Desbrow had seen Cecile and her brother on the lake, but by some chance none of the parties had met. On that day, Lady Emily, feeling fatigued from a long ramble the previous one, had remained within doors, while the brother and sister went on the water. Cecile was replying to some affectionate address of Auguste, when her voice struck on the ear of Desbrow, and the grateful tenderness of the few words he had heard, confirmed him in the erroneous conclusion he had drawn from seeing her tête-à-tête with the handsome stranger.

After staying three days at Como, the Vavasours and Bethunes arrived at Milan; and the day of their arrival, having met the Marchesa Ferona, who had formerly been known to Lady Vavasour in England, she so pressingly solicited them to accompany her to the Princess Boromeo's reception that evening, urging as an inducement the opportunity it would give them of seeing the best private collection of pictures and statues in Milan illuminated, that they consented to go; and thus, were Lady Emily and Lord Heatherfield thrown into each other's way.

The agitation produced on Lady Emily by the momentary interview, had caused her to faint; and Auguste de Bethune, having placed her in the arms of her mother, had gone in search of Cecile, who was in another apartment with Lord Vavasour; and was leading her to her friend, when they were seen by Desbrow. Neither Heatherfield nor Desbrow was observed by any of the rest of the party; and the sudden faintness

of Lady Emily was attributed to the heat of the rooms. When she was sufficiently recovered to move, she was leaving the apartment, supported by her anxious parents, when they encountered a group of ladies, in the midst of whom, to their unspeakable surprise and annoyance, they recognised the *ci-devant* Lady Walmer. Her confusion and embarrassment at the rencontre, which not all her practised art could conceal, was apparent to all around her; and the marked avoidance of her, by the English group, was equally visible to her companions.

Lady Emily, judging that the presence of Lord Heatherfield and Lady Walmer in the same assembly was a positive proof of their marriage, of which event she had hitherto allowed herself to doubt, now shrank before the conviction; and retired from the Palazzo Boromeo with much more bitter feelings than when she had entered it. That the husband of another should thus have power to agitate and distress her, was most humiliating to her delicate and pure mind; and she determined that, however much the effort might cost her, he should be thought of no more, save as the husband of another. The resolution was right, and praiseworthy, and if not always sustained, the fault lay not in the purity of her intentions.

If there be a situation more painful than another, it is that of a young and innocent girl, who having so long indulged an attachment, formed under the sanction of her parents, that it has become, as it were, a part of her very being, suddenly discovers that it is incumbent upon her to subdue it. She has bestowed her heart, ere she had learned to question the truth of himon whom the gift was conferred; and when untoward circumstances arise to separate them, her health and peace but too often fall a sacrifice to the struggle which reason and virtue oppose to affection.

Emily, however, did not abandon herself to the indulgence of unavailing grief, but the arrow of disappointed love had sunk deep in her heart, and though her efforts to conceal her sufferings from those around her were in part successful, they brought not consolation to her wounded spirit. Often did the agitated and reproachful glance of Lord Heatherfield, as she had last seen him, recur to her memory. Had he a right to look reproachful? he, who had steeped her days in grief, and clouded the future. And yet, that eloquent look, it seemed to express that he was more sinned against than sinning; and it returned again and again, to disturb her peace. She determined to propose to her parents to make no longer sojourn

at Milan; for she dreaded meeting him and his wife, whose splendid attire and flushed cheeks contrasted so forcibly with his sombre habit, and pale countenance. No; she would think of him no more; and yet, in a short time, in spite of every effort, her thoughts again reverted to him.

Lord and Lady Vavasour had consulted together on their return from the Palazzo Boromeo, and had agreed that the sudden indisposition of their daughter must have proceeded from meeting the *ci-devant* Lady Walmer, and that, therefore, the sooner they left her vicinity the better. They proposed leaving Milan the next day, to which Emily cheerfully assenting, the whole party were in their travelling carriages at an early hour, and only a short time after the friends, who had set out on the same route, little conscious who were following them.

"Did you not observe the courage and impudence of that woman?" asked Lady Vavasour of her husband, when referring to their interview with Lady Walmer; "my maid saw Lord Heatherfield walking in the street near our hotel, the evening we arrived, and said he was looking pale and thin; no wonder, — for I dare say that, long before this, he has had cause to repent the marriage he has made."

"Why, as you ask me, my dear," replied Lord Vavasour, "I must say, that I thought I never saw a woman look more embarrassed than did Lady Walmer, when we met her. It was evident to me, that she was not at all prepared for the meeting; and, bad as her conduct has been, I could not help pitying her, when I saw her agitation, and the astonished looks of her companions."

"I really lose patience with you, Lord Vavasour," said his wife; "this is always the way with you men; let a woman only be handsome, and you are all ready to pity her, whatsoever her transgressions may have been. For my part, I should be ashamed to pity such a person; and I wonder at her impudence, in going into society, where she must continually meet people with whom she was acquainted before she compromised her honour; and who of course could not renew their acquaintance with her."

"Well, well, my dear, let us not dispute this point," said the good-natured Lord Vavasour, "for if you reflect on her position, you must admit that it is one to excite pity, and the more, because she has been so blameable."

"Who ever heard of such an argument?" replied the angry lady. "So then, the more blameable a woman has been, according to your liberal principles, the more she is to be pitied."

"Decidedly," said Lord Vavasour; "an innocent woman is consoled for the injustice of censures, by the consciousness of innocence, of which nothing can deprive her; but she who feels that she merits the severity of the world, has a still more severe monitor within her own breast, whose reproaches are too bitter, not to entitle her to the pity of all who reflect on her position."

"I see it's of no use arguing with you," said Lady Vavasour; "but you never can persuade me that a woman who has behaved ill is a fit object of commiseration. Whatever her troubles may be, she richly deserved them; and I am for visiting her sins with the most unmitigated severity, as a punishment to her, and a warning to others."

"Would you not increase the punishment where the delinquent was more than usually handsome?" asked Lord Vavasour, with a most provoking look of irony.

"No," replied his angry wife, offended by the implied sarcasm, "I would make no distinction between the handsome and the ugly; I would leave that injustice to *your* sex, who always are ready to forget the enormity of the offence in the beauty of the offender; and, had I my way, I would remain a day or two at Milan, purposely to expose this shameless woman, for if I only told her history to the Marquesa Ferona, she would soon find herself *chassée* from society."

"Is it possible?" asked Lord Vavasour, "that you could be so mischievous—so unfeminine? But no, I will not believe it; I cannot think so ill of you."

And so saying, he left the room, to give the necessary instructions for their departure, wondering at the extent of hostility which prudery will occasion a woman, not naturally malicious, to entertain towards those of her own sex, who, having forfeited her esteem and respect, ought even, while avoided, to become objects of her pity.

Lady Emily disclosed to Cecile alone her momentary interview with Lord Heatherfield, and the effect it had produced on her feelings. "You can no longer doubt that he is married," said she, "now that I saw them in the same room. They would not—could not, in common decency, meet in such an assembly in any other character than as man and wife; and yet, weak as I was, I doubted their marriage, even after Lord Scamper had announced it at Paris."

"And it was natural that you should doubt it, my beloved friend," replied Cecile, "when, only so short a time before, the letter, the last I ever received from Mr. Desbrow, informed me that his friend had entirely broken off with Lady Walmer,

and was more attached to you than ever. A mystery seems attached to both our fates; and even now, notwithstanding you saw them in the same room, I cannot bring myself to believe that they are married."

"But, surely," said Emily, "you do not—cannot think so very ill of him, as to believe that he is living with Lady Walmer without giving her the right to his name, or that he would present to society a person as his wife who had no right to that title?"

"No, certainly!" replied Cecile; "but we do not know that he presented her: he may, like us, have found himself in her society by chance. In short, my dear Emily, I have heard so much good of him, from one whose opinion I had learned to value, that I cannot quite condemn him without more positive proofs. Look at my own situation: appearances are surely very strong against Mr. Desbrow; and yet I have never believed that he is capable of deception: I should cease to feel for him as I do"—and a deep blush followed the avowal—"if I thought ill of him; but, in defiance of his inexplicable silence, —nay, perhaps of my own reason,—I continue to have an unshaken faith in him."

There was something so consolatory to Emily in the confidence that Cecile expressed, that it soothed her mind; and she retired to her pillow with a less saddened spirit than she had possessed for many a previous night. Happy period of life, when hope can so quickly replace the sombre visions of despair, and the youthful mind turns from the dark realities of the present to the brighter future, which only experience teaches us to doubt, by having made us feel the fallacy of its promises!

CHAPTER XLVI.

Partout nous rendons hommage, par nos troubles et par nos remords secrets, à la sainteté de cette vertu que nous violons; partout un fonds d'ennui et de tristesse, inséparable du crime, nous fait sentir que l'ordre et l'innocence sont le seul bonheur qui nous était destiné sur la terre. Nous avons beau faire montrer une vaine intrépidité; la conscience criminelle se trahit toujours elle-même.

The Prince and Princess Romano pursued their thoughtless career of extravagance and folly, each day plunging them deeper into debt, and all the humiliations attending it. The uncle of the Prince died at this period, leaving his fortune to his nephew, on the condition of his staking the title of Prince Cesarini;—a condition readily complied with. And now the Princess believed that there was an end to all the pecuniary embarrassments of her husband, and, consequently, to her own liability for the sums for which she had given her signature. She little knew that the princely inheritance of the uncle was already dissipated by *post obits* to all its amount, leaving nothing to its ruined inheritor, but the satisfaction of freeing himself from the power of some of the wily gamesters and usurers, who had made him their prey. He had not courage to tell her his real position; for independent of the humiliation attending such an avowal, he had seen enough of her temper and selfishness to cause him to tremble at the very idea of the ebullition of both, which such a declaration must draw down on him, and—though not dreading the ruin that awaited him, or if he dreaded it, silencing reflection in the round of pleasures in which he passed his existence—he shrank before the thought of the bitter sarcasms and reproaches with which the princess would not fail to overwhelm him, on discovering the deception he had practised on her.

The indifference she had felt for him on their marriage, had been followed by contempt and dislike, on detecting that he had sought her for her reputed wealth, and not from affection: her vanity had never pardoned this mortifying discovery; and she took so little pains to conceal her sentiments, that he became disgusted with his home, and still more so with her, whom conscience told him he had irreparably injured.

The Princess was not slow in perceiving the inattention of her husband, and in resenting it with violence. Her reproaches drove him still more frequently abroad, and he formed an attachment—if so, such disgraceful *liaisons* can be called—with a *danseuse* lately arrived from Florence, to whom he publicly offered his attentions.

The Princess had made too many enemies at Milan, to be left long in ignorance of the conduct of her unprincipled husband. Anonymous letters poured in on her, couched in terms the most calculated to wound and mortify her, and while writhing in agony under the humiliations she was forced to endure, she found herself without a single friend to whom she could turn for consolation. It was at this crisis that she met Lady Vavasour and her daughter at the Palazzo Boromeo; and their marked avoidance, coupled with the confusion which the rencontre excited in her, awakened suspicions in the minds of her enemies, highly derogatory to her honour—suspicions which they were most active in endeavouring to justify. The Princess Barberini, with whom the Princess Romano had quarrelled, was appealed to by the enemies of this lady; exaggerated statements of the looks and manner of the noble English family towards their compatriot were made to her; and all this brought to her recollection the extraordinary coldness of the minister at Florence, on the occasion of the marriage, and the as extraordinary rudeness of all the English whom they chanced to meet there.

Something very dreadful must be attached to the Princess, and they must find it out. Inquiries were made at every side —letters were written—and, *en attendant*, it was determined that she should be deposed from her usurped sovereignty over the society at Milan, and that those she had excluded from it should be received again. The few ladies who had acted with her in drawing the line of demarcation, now disclaimed the part they had taken, and threw all the blame and odium on her, so that she found herself slighted abroad and neglected at home; tortured by feelings of wounded pride and vanity that preyed upon her heart, and bereft of the last consolation of the wretched—an approving conscience.

It was now that for the first time this unhappy woman began to reflect on her past life, and the misconduct that led to her present misery. Conscience, though it may be silenced for awhile, makes itself heard at length, and bitterly did it now avenge her former neglect of its dictates. In vain did she endeavour to fly from the reflections that pursued her: the solitude in which she found herself gave her time to think, even

o madness; but, alas! she had yet to learn to submit with meekness to the punishment she had drawn on herself. She was more disposed to oppose, than to bend to the chastisement; and the angry feelings she gave way to, served but to aggravate her sufferings.

To her brother she turned for that consolation and protection, which seemed denied to her on every other side; but here again pride met her, armed with its stings. How could she address him, on whom she had been exposed to avenge it? how ask him to countenance and protect a sister, who had thrown away all the advantages of a brilliant station, and a large fortune, and made herself an outcast from her country and society? No, she would not—could not—write to him; she would suffer all—every thing, sooner than this humiliation.

At this crisis of her fate, an English lady arrived at Milan, whose character some few years before had caused her exclusion from society. The Princess, as Lady Walmer, had been amongst those who had the most severely censured the lady in question, and set the example of refusing to receive her. This conduct had never been forgotten or forgiven; and when the lady found herself again in the same place with her former enemy, she concluded that she must either expose the character of the *ci-devant* Lady Walmer, and so chase her from society, or be herself excluded by the influence of that lady. She hesitated not to take her measures accordingly, and the curiosity excited by malevolence, was amply satisfied by the disclosures which interested malice was not slow to make. The simple truth, if adhered to, might not have answered the purposes of the narrator, because lapses from conjugal fidelity are unhappily not crimes unknown or unpardonable in Italy; but when to it were added exaggerated representations of the disgraceful *esclandre* of a public elopement, and the death of the deserted husband, stated to have been caused by the misconduct of the wife, the utmost indignation was excited. Her subsequent desertion of her lover, who was represented as a sort of *preux chevalier*, pining in despair at the inconstancy of the woman for whom he was said to have made the greatest sacrifices, was considered an aggravation of her guilt, but when to these representations was joined, the assertion that the Princess was guilty of deception in passing herself off for a person of great wealth, she being possessed of but a comparatively small fortune,—it was no wonder that she found herself

deserted by all those who had hitherto flocked round her, and to the greater part of whom her husband stood indebted.

The Prince was looked upon by his compatriots as an injured man, a victim to the insidious arts of a designing adventuress; he was greatly to be pitied, as they said; but for her, no punishment could be too severe.

When the Princess Romano heard of the arrival of Lady Montressor at Milan, and her intention of establishing herself there, she felt that her own reign was ended; for well she knew the tactics of her enemy, and the effects they could not fail to produce. Lady Montressor was supported by two infallible passports to foreign society, a husband's protection, and a large fortune, and therefore a contest with her, under present circumstances, would be too unequal, to leave the most remote prospect of success to her country-woman, who determined, therefore, not to risk a battle; but, if she must fall, to fall like Cæsar, with decent dignity.

Illness, that excuse so often had recourse to when a retreat from society becomes necessary, was now alleged as the reason that the Princess Romano no longer appeared at the brilliant reunions, where she had hitherto formed one of the greatest ornaments. Nor was the excuse without foundation; for her health had suffered severely within the last few weeks, from the various painful emotions that had passed through her mind. Left to the uninterrupted solitude of her own house, the total inattention of the Prince was now more forcibly felt. The recollection of the soothing of the husband she had wronged and slighted, was brought back to her mind, by the contrast offered to it by *him* for whom she had made pecuniary sacrifices, to the amount of all her fortune. The quiet evenings in her boudoir, when some trifling indisposition having confined her to the house, Lord Walmer gave up his engagements and his club to sit chatting with her by the fireside, were now remembered. The thousand little acts of good-natured attention; the flowers and new novels brought by him, to enliven a solitude, that could hardly be so called, from the select friends continually dropping in to share it—all, all now recurred to her memory with acute but vain regret, as she looked at the splendid, but deserted salons around her, whence magnificence had banished comfort, and where all the decorations denoted they were prepared for brilliant society, and not for the enjoyment of domestic happiness. They were as a theatre, fitted up for splendid representations, where the actors and actresses

were required to put on their richest robes to play their different parts, but the exhibition finished, and the audience and actors retired, how dreary, how chilling became this gilded desert! Home—that blessed English word, that sends a thousand fond recollections thrilling through the heart—where was she now to find it? Not in the lofty chambers, whose gilded ceilings spoke only of luxury and state, whose walls, lined with the glorious triumphs of the masters of painting, seemed to mock her gloom. Not in galleries, where the most exquisite *chefs-d'œuvre* of sculptures, reflected in vast mirrors, seemed starting into life, but with all the cold obduracy of death. No, she could find here *no home*, and her dazzled eyes and wearied spirits turned from the splendour around her, while she sighed for some quiet spot in dear—dear England, where she might pass the rest of her life, hearing again her native accents, and seeing dear familiar faces once more, even though they might no longer greet her with smiles. And him—to whom she had united her destiny—where was he, that she was thus left to uninterrupted solitude?—he surely, as she thought with bitterness, had no reason to hate her. She had not wronged or slighted *him*,—nay, she had given him the wealth with which the generosity of a betrayed husband had enriched her. And tears of bitterness, at the Prince's unkind desertion of her—of her, a stranger in his land—streamed from her eyes.

Well did she know that he was now passing his hours in the society of a meretricious beauty, on whom was lavished the remnant of his ruined fortune; and the reflection, that for such a person was she deserted, added bitterness to her already deeply wounded feelings. She wept in uncontrollable anguish; pride and vanity, the two ruling passions of her weak mind, were bruised, but not subdued; and every blow aimed at them caused them to bleed afresh.

Now was it that her soul yearned for some friend to speak comfort to her, but yearned in vain. She was alone, and in a foreign country, where she had been too much envied to be able to excite the milder feeling of pity, and that grief for her wrongs which sympathy might have lightened, eat into her very soul, as came the bitter reflection, that no one cared for—no one felt for her.

Her brother, at this moment, crossed again her memory, —yes, *he* must have still some natural feelings; the ties of blood never can be wholly obliterated; and though he must blame, yet must he also pity her. Then came a thousand tender recollections of their days of infancy, those happy days,

when care was a stranger to her joyous heart; their affectionate and cordial intercourse in maturer age, their tearful parting, when his regiment was ordered to a distant clime—all now passed before her with a vividness that seemed as if long, long months had not separated them; and in her awakened feelings of affection towards this last—this only object on whom they could repose, she wondered how she could have remained so long without throwing herself on his pity and love. Yes, she would write to him on the morrow; she would tell him how bitterly she had repented, if not expiated, her errors; and she would pray him to take her once more to his bosom, and let her die beneath the shelter of his roof—that roof beneath which her happiest days had been passed.

The pendule on her chimney striking two in the morning, interrupted the train of thought, that had made her forget the present, in reflections on the past; and she was rising to seek her couch, when a noise in the vestibule attracted her attention. It grew louder and louder: a thousand fears crossed her excited imagination, till, unable any longer to support the suspense, she rushed towards the spot, and saw the body of a man, borne by servants into the apartment of the Prince. All the woman and the wife was aroused in her heart at the sight.

It was—it must be her husband—dead, or mortally wounded; and she forgot that he had wronged her, that she had never loved him, as with pitying anxiety she rushed to the couch on which they had placed him; and, by the light which now fell on his pale face, recognised not her husband—but her brother.

CHAPTER XLVII.

"Desperate is the grief of that heart which prosperity has hardened, and who feels the first arrow of affliction strike it through the life of a beloved object."

The brother of the Princess Romano had lost all trace of her for some time, until he read, in Galignani's Journal, the account of her marriage. At first he disbelieved it; but the

details were so circumstantially related, that he at length was satisfied of its truth. He was shocked and disgusted at the indecorous haste with which she had contracted this alliance with a stranger; and it led him to believe that Lord Heatherfield was less blameable than he had previously imagined. He remained for some time in constant expectation, that letters from her would be forwarded to him from England, as he had left instructions with his agent there, to send after him any letter that might arrive. Though deeply wounded by his sister's conduct, he had not ceased to feel for her a lively sentiment of affection; which urged him to visit Italy, that he might satisfy himself as to her real situation, and add to its respectability and comfort, by giving her his countenance and protection.

At Florence, he ascertained, that her marriage had been solemnized there with all due regularity; and that she resided at Milan, whither he proceeded solely for the purpose of seeing her. Unfortunately, the person who gave the address, was unacquainted with her husband's change of name.

On his first arrival at Florence, Lord Bertie formed an acquaintance with the handsome *danseuse* who had subsequently become the favourite of the Prince Romano, at Milan; and, as she knew when the rich and generous Englishman was expected to arrive at the latter place, he found a note from her, at the hotel where he stopped, awaiting him, requesting that he would sup with her that night.

It was late when he reached Milan; and as it only wanted an hour to the time appointed by the Signora for him to present himself, he merely changed his travelling dress, and wrote a few lines to his sister, which he put in his pocket and proceeded to the residence of Mademoiselle, intending there to learn the exact address of the Princess, and announce his visit to her for the next day.

The *danseuse*, who expected him, and wished to receive him without the presence of her new friend, whose jealousy she dreaded, had made many ineffectual efforts to get rid of the Prince; who at length becoming suspicious, pretended to withdraw,—but having taken his leave, stationed himself at the corner of the street, where he soon saw his suspicions justified by the arrival of the stranger. He followed him softly up the stairs, into the ante-room, and was a witness to the animated, and more than amicable, welcome with which he was received by the false Signora.

The enraged Prince rushed into the chamber, confounded

his unworthy *protégée* with the most violent reproaches, and in terms of imperious insolence commanded the stranger to withdraw.

His commands were treated with contempt; the stranger declared his intention of remaining; and the infuriated Prince, losing all command of his reason, drew a cane sword with which he was armed, and plunged it into the side of his unarmed rival, who dropped, deluged with blood, on the floor.

In falling, a letter dropped from his pocket; the Prince seized it, and beheld with astonishment that it was addressed to his own wife. To tear it open was the work of a moment: but it was written in English, of which language he had so slight a knowledge, that the name only, signed to the few lines, was intelligible. This name he had often heard his wife repeat, as being that of her only brother, who now lay before him, to all appearance dead, or dying. He asked la Signora to repeat the name, and her articulation of it convinced him he was right.

Giddy and unreflecting as was the Prince, he was not destitute of feeling; though, alas! those of contrition were but of brief duration in his heart. He ordered the servant of the Signora to send to his palazzo, to command the attendance of his carriage and half-a-dozen of his servants; and consigned to them the nearly lifeless person of his brother-in-law, with strict injunctions to convey him to his apartment: and having ordered that two of the most celebrated surgeons at Milan might be called in for the wounded man, and provided himself with the necessary money and wardrobe, he left Milan for Naples, there to await the result of the wound of Lord Bertie. He hoped that it might not prove mortal, and that the brother and sister might be comforted by finding themselves beneath the same roof.

He had given instructions that the catastrophe might be broken as gently as possible to the Princess, who he concluded would be in her bed when her brother was brought to the palazzo: but, as we have shown, the event justified not his expectations; and this unfortunate woman found her only, her beloved brother, mortally wounded, at the moment that she had been thinking of him with feelings of awakened tenderness, and looking to him as her last refuge from despair.

A fainting fit brought a temporary oblivion to her grief and terror; but soon, too soon, she returned to a consciousness of the horrors of her situation. She broke from the arms of her female attendants, who tried, but in vain, to restrain her; and

rushed with frantic sorrow to the couch on which lay her dying brother.

She threw herself on her knees by his side; she seized his hand, which was covered with the blood flowing from the wound to which it had been pressed; and she called to him, addressing him by every epithet that tenderness could suggest, to look at her,—to speak to her once more.

Those well-known accents awoke recollection in the dying man, and though life was fast ebbing, he made an effort to speak; but the sounds died on his lips: and opening his eyes, over which the film of death was spreading, he gave her a parting look, in which the expression of affection triumphed over that of pain; and faintly pressing her hand, which held his, expired without a groan.

It was many weeks ere the unhappy Princess became conscious of what had occurred; for a violent brain fever had brought her to the verge of the tomb, leaving her in a state of almost childish imbecility; and such was the alarming degree of languor it had left behind, that her physicians pronounced that, though she might linger on for some months, her recovery was hopeless. She would sit for whole hours with her eyes fixed on the couch where she had seen her brother expire, as if watching some one who reposed on it. At the least noise she would turn with impatience, and make signs for it to cease; and then approach on tip-toes, stooping her head as if to gaze on the pillow; then having again held up her hand to command silence, she would return to her chair, and fall into the same state of abstraction as before. Whenever she spoke it was in English, of which the attendants were ignorant; and all her conversation was addressed to the couch on which she supposed her brother to recline. Gazing on that couch, while tears streamed down her pale cheeks, she would recount all the humiliations and chagrin she had suffered, and entreat of her brother to take her away with him.

While the erring and unfortunate Princess Romano was in this state, the creditors of her unfeeling husband took possession of the palazzo, and had even the inhumanity to propose ejecting her from it;—nay, some of them were for sending her to a prison, as the bills she had accepted were now due, and the absence of the Prince Romano led them to suspect that there existed but little chance of their being honoured.

Some of the most obdurate of the creditors even endeavoured to force themselves into her presence; and her female attendants

having in vain attempted to prevent them, they entered the ante-room that led to her chamber, followed by the under servants, who were clamorous in their complaints against their ruined master and mistress.

The sounds of their loud and angry voices alarmed the Princess; she looked with frantic gaze around her, and springing to the couch, on which her brother had expired, and where she still believed him to recline, threw herself on her knees beside it, exclaiming, "Save me, oh! my brother, save me!"

At this moment, the creditors entered; and rudely approaching her, explained the nature of their claims. But they spoke to ears incapable of comprehending them, for ever since the death of her brother she seemed to have wholly forgotten the Italian language. She hid her face on the pillow, still clasping it with her arms, and uttering faint cries of "Save me, dear brother! save me!" while they stood in doubt as to whether she really was insane, or only acting insanity.

The repeated representations of her female attendants at length convinced them that her reason had fled; and they retired to consult what was the best course to be pursued under such circumstances.

To the pity of a few of her former acquaintances at Milan, did the Princess Romano now owe the scanty personal comforts that were allowed her; and though, by the death of her brother, she became heiress to his large fortune, the individuals around her, most interested in the affair, were ignorant of the circumstance, and her mental faculties had received too rude a shock to permit her to give it even a thought. Thus, while she was reduced to the humiliation of living on the charity of strangers, a humiliation to which she, however, was insensible, she was mistress of a fortune that might have commanded the respect of those who now reproached her poverty. At moments, gleams of recollection would flash across her bewildered mind; and she would look around her as if in search of some one; but on the least noise, she would rush to the couch, conceal her face behind its pillow, and while her limbs trembled with the agitation that shook her frame, "Save me, brother! save me!" were the only words that passed her lips.

An account had been written to Naples to the Prince Romano, to apprise him of the fatal result of the wound of his brother-in-law, and the illness and mental derangement of his wife. He contented himself with writing to one or two of his friends at Milan, to request them to attend to the personal comfort of

the Princess, a request that had little weight, and he sought consolation for the temporary chagrin he experienced, in all the pleasures and luxuries that Naples could offer.

The *danseuse* being the only witness to his murder of the brother of his wife, he felt little alarm as to her betraying him; and the continuation of the Princess's imbecility, he considered on the whole rather fortunate, as it precluded her from instituting any inquiries on the subject. His regret could not, as he philosophically reasoned, bring back his brother-in-law to life, or his wife to her senses, and therefore it was useless for to grieve for what was inevitable. But to banish the troublesome reflections that would sometimes intrude, in spite of his callosity, he was obliged to have recourse to more than his ordinary pursuits of pleasure, and passed his time in a round of amusements that filled up every hour, until his diminished purse began to remind him that it was not that of Fortunatus, and was much more quickly exhausted than the pleasures that had drawn louis after louis from it.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

"Again we meet, but now to part no more,
'Till death shall snap the bonds of love asunder;
For nought but the grim king, who conquers all
By taking life, can end a love like ours.
Oh! let us pray his mandate may go forth,
To summon both from earth the self-same instant."

Lord Heatherfield and his friend Desbrow had made several excursions on horseback, in the neighbourhood of Verona, and were returning from one of them late in the evening, when having to cross the road leading from La Guarda to Verona, the sounds of angry voices, mingled with entreaties and female shrieks, struck on their ears. They were armed, and attended by two servants who had pistols; and having desired them to follow, they instantly urged their horses into a rapid pace, and soon came up to two travelling carriages, surrounded by eight or ten brigands, who were threatening destruction to any one who offered them resistance. Two gentlemen were kept

prisoners by four of the brigands, the men-servants were lying flat on their faces, as were the postillions, by the command of the robbers, while they were rifling the carriages of their contents. A group of females stood wringing their hands in terror, their cries interrupted by the threats and coarse jests of the brigands.

The friends galloped boldly up to the party, uttering shouts to make them believe that they were more numerous, upon which the brigands left their prisoners, and faced the new comers, with whom they engaged. The gentlemen and servants now seized the arms, which the robbers had not taken from the carriages, and advanced to the succour of the assailants of the brigands, who finding themselves pressed on all sides, hastily retreated, but not until three of them had fallen dead, and two more were desperately wounded. While retreating, one of them turned and aimed his pistol at the gentleman who had shot his companion; but at the moment he was taking aim, Desbrow fired at him, and the pistol dropped from his shattered hand, the ball having fractured his arm.

All this was the business of a few minutes; two of the servants only were wounded, and the ladies rushed to their deliverers in speechless joy. But how express their surprise in discovering in two of them, Lord Heatherfield and Mr. Desbrow, who were equally astonished at finding whom they had rescued.

Lord Vavasour had repeatedly shaken hands with the friends, and even Lady Vavasour could not resist thanking Lord Heatherfield most cordially for having saved them; how then, could Lady Emily do less than present her trembling hand, which was grasped by that of her lover, but almost as instantaneously let drop, as he recollected that hand was now the property of another. She remarked the action, and attributed it to the reflection of his own altered position, which, as the husband of Lady Walmer, entitled him not to the indulgence of such a familiarity.

Desbrow had stood almost petrified by the side of Cecile, who gazed at him with tearful eyes, as she marked the paleness of his face, on which the lamps of the carriage shed their light. At length, she found words, and tremulous with emotion, turned to Desbrow and said, "How shall I thank you for having saved my brother? I saw the brigand's pistol aimed at him, when your shot made it drop from his hand. Auguste, my brother, here is Mr. Desbrow: assist me to thank him."

Auguste directly reached forth his hand, which was seized by that of Desbrow, who, not content with merely pressing it,

clasped the astonished Auguste in his arms, exclaiming, "Now, then, once more I may know happiness, and Cecile, dear, dear Cecile, may be mine."

"All this seems very strange, but very happy," said Lord Vavasour; "but come, come, the high-road is no place for explanations, let us reserve them for Verona, where I invite you, Lord Heatherfield, and your friend, to join our supper-table."

"I shall certainly wait on you," said Desbrow, "but, *en attendant*, I shall ride by the side of the carriage of Mademoiselle de Bethune, to be quite sure that nothing can again occur."

The happy and bewildered Cecile could only press her friend Lady Emily's arm, in speechless joy; but that young lady was far from participating in her rapture.

Having exchanged cordial congratulations with Lady Vavasour and Lady Emily, Auguste de Bethune led his sister to her carriage; when Lord Heatherfield, astonished at his coldness towards Lady Emily, whom he believed to be his wife, advanced respectfully towards her to offer his arm to assist her also to it. She gave him her hand, but when he would have led her to that of the Comte de Bethune, she motioned that she wished to be conducted to the other.

"How," said Lord Heatherfield, "do you not travel with your husband?"

"My husband!" exclaimed Emily; "what can you mean?"

"Answer me, I entreat, I beseech you," uttered he, rapidly, "is not that gentleman," pointing to Auguste, "your husband?"

"I have no husband," replied the agitated girl; "but you, Lord Heatherfield, you, who are married, is it well of you thus to try my feelings?" and a flood of tears burst from her eyes.

"I married! no, I never will be, dearest, adored Emily, unless you are my wife," said Heatherfield.

"Come, come, Emily, my dear," said Lord Vavasour, "your mother is in the carriage waiting for you, so let us be off; you'll not fail to meet us at supper, Heatherfield." And so saying, he hurried Lady Emily to the carriage, who still leant on Lord Heatherfield's arm, and gently returned the pressure of his hand, as he placed her in the carriage.

Who shall describe the feelings of the lovers as they proceeded towards Verona? Desbrow kept by the side of Cecile's carriage, who had opened the window, that she might occasionally exchange a few words with him, while her hand rested in that of her brother, who was a glad witness of her happiness. Heatherfield escorted the carriage of Lord Va-

vasour, while Emily, with a heart overflowing with delight, watched his movements, and felt her soul again expand to hope.

Arrived at Verona, Lord Heatherfield sought a few moments' conversation in private with Lord Vavasour, and explained to him the marriage of Lady Walmer with the Prince, and his consequent freedom from all engagements, save that which love for his daughter had rendered irrevocable to his heart.

"Well, then, she is yours, my dear Heatherfield," replied the gratified father. "All is now forgiven and forgotten. I will explain all this to Lady Vavasour, and though she is a little prudish (a fault on the right side, my dear fellow), she loves our child too well to stand between her and her happiness."

While this interview took place, Desbrow had sought Auguste de Bethune, and made him acquainted with all that is already known to our readers. When he described his horror and grief at discovering that he had killed the brother of his affianced wife, the generous, kind-hearted Auguste embraced him, and made light of the wound he had received; but when he drew from his pocket-book the note he had received from Cecile's father, and handing it to Auguste, expressed his fear that the Comte de Bethune would never receive him as the husband of his daughter, Auguste told him that *he* was now the sole guardian of Cecile, as their father was no more, and that *he* gladly would bestow her hand where he knew her heart had long been given. Desbrow was only able to embrace him. They agreed to conceal from Cecile the part her father had acted towards Desbrow, and they then sought the rest of the party, than which a happier never assembled together. Even Lady Vavasour forgot all her former objections to Lord Heatherfield; and when the two delighted girls found themselves for a few minutes alone, ere seeking their pillows, Lady Emily, embracing her friend, exclaimed, "How right you were, dearest Cecile, in not doubting your lover, and how wrong was I in doing such injustice to mine!"

Nothing now remains to be said, except that the whole party proceeded to Naples, where the nuptials of the Marquis of Heatherfield with the Lady Emily Vavasour were solemnized, on the same day that Mr. Desbrow led Mademoiselle de Bethune to the hymeneal altar.

A letter from the Marquesa Ferroni having apprized Lady Vavasour of the death of the brother of the Princess Romano, and the ruined health and deranged intellects of that unhappy woman, as also that the creditors had taken possession of the palazzo, and threatened to arrest its mistress, the Marchioness

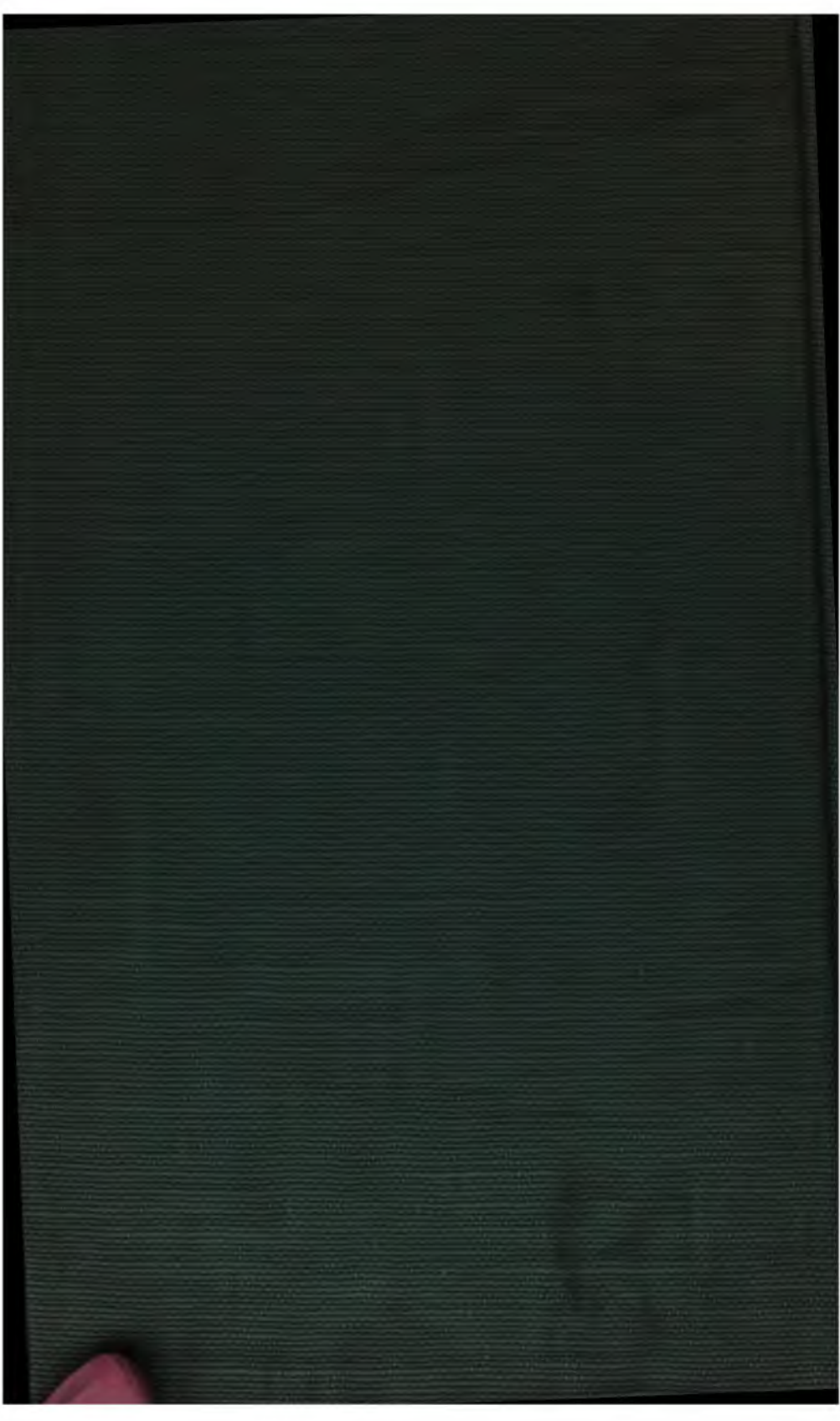
of Heatherfield entreated her mother so warmly in favour of the Princess, that she consented to write to the Marquesa, requesting that every attention might be paid to that unfortunate person, and engaging to defray all expenses that might be incurred. She even sent her own maid, a most humane and intelligent Englishwoman, to attend her; but she only arrived at Milan to witness the last hours of the wretched, but penitent woman, who recovered not her reason until a few days before her death. It was a consolation to her, to receive the soothing attentions of her humble countrywoman; and when she discovered that it was to the kindness of Lady Heatherfield and Lady Vavasour that she owed this last comfort, she devoted a few of her numbered hours, to writing to Lady Heatherfield an avowal of the arts she had employed to entrap Lord Heatherfield, and make him break his engagement, knowing, as she did, that his heart was devoted to another.

She made a will, bequeathing the whole of her fortune to the Marchioness of Heatherfield, as a slight atonement for the unhappiness she had caused her, and died a true penitent, giving in her last hours an example of Christian fortitude and piety, that we may hope was accepted in expiation of the errors of her life—errors that plunged her in shame and dishonour, and which owed their existence to want of religion and moral principles. She had thought of and lived but for society, unmindful that it casts from its bosom the unhappy and the erring, as a vigorous constitution repels contagious diseases. The past and the present were now unveiled to her dying eyes, robbed of all their illusions, and she turned from that world which had hitherto been her idol, to fix her hopes on the mercy of *Him*, who can pardon those sins that *his* fallible creatures condemn without pity.

A few days before her death, she entreated that her body, with that of her brother, might be sent to England, and laid in the same tomb with her parents. Almost the last words she uttered were—

> " Lean not on earth, 'twill pierce thee to the heart,—
> A broken reed at best, but oft a spear."

The Friends returned to England, blessed with wives, whose virtues render them an ornament to society, and a source of the purest happiness to their domestic circles.

THE END.

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